

ILLUSTRATED HOMES



DESCRIBING
REAL HOUSES AND
REAL PEOPLE

E. C. GARDNER

ILLUSTRATED HOMES!



A SERIES OF PAPERS

DESCRIBING

Real Houses and Real People.

By E. C. GARDNER,

AUTHOR OF "HOMES, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM."

With Illustrations.



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ILLUSTRATED HOMES:

A SERIES OF PAPERS

DESCRIBING

REAL HOMES AND REAL PEOPLE,



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

HOMES, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM.

OR

HINTS ON LOCATING AND BUILDING
A HOUSE.

IN LETTERS BETWEEN AN ARCHITECT AND A FAMILY MAN
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.	PAGE
THE HOUSE THE JUDGE BUILT	15
CHAPTER II.	
CAPTAIN GEORGE'S PLAN	37
CHAPTER III.	
THE HOUSE OF ABRAM	52
CHAPTER IV.	
MR. JOHN SMITH'S HOUSE	71
CHAPTER V.	
THE HOME OF THE PROFESSOR	91
CHAPTER VI.	
LUCIA'S CASTLE	110
CHAPTER VII.	
THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S LODGE	127

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOME OF MR. AND MRS. BENEDICT . . .	147
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLANTER'S HOME	167
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X.

THE PARSONAGE	183
-------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

ONE OF KING KOLE'S COTTAGES	199
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

THE POET'S ABIDING-PLACE	215
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DOCTOR'S HOME	233
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOUSE THAT NEVER WAS BUILT	255
--	-----

CHAPTER XV.

HOW IT HAPPENED	269
---------------------------	-----





LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
THE JUDGE AND HIS WHEELBARROW (<i>Initial</i>) . . .	15
THE JUDGE'S FLOOR PLANS.	27
INTERIOR OF COTTAGE CHAMBER	30
THE JUDGE'S HOUSE	31
WEDDING IN CHURCH	43
CAPTAIN GEORGE'S FLOOR PLANS	45
CAPTAIN GEORGE'S HOUSE	49
ABRAM'S FIRST FLOOR	59
ABRAM'S SECOND FLOOR	63
ABRAM'S HOUSE	67
STOPPING A LEAK	69
JOHN SMITH'S FIRST FLOOR	79
MRS. SMITH AND HER CHARMING DAUGHTERS . . .	82
JOHN SMITH'S SECOND FLOOR	83
JOHN SMITH'S BEAU IDEAL	86
MRS. SMITH'S ADMIRATION	87
A GROUP OF EASY-CHAIRS	98

THE PROFESSOR'S FIRST STORY	99
THE PROFESSOR'S SECOND STORY	103
THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE	107
ACCURATE INSTRUCTIONS	117
LUCIA'S PLAN	119
LUCIA'S CORNER LOT	123
BUCKINGHAM'S PUZZLE	129
BUCKINGHAM'S BASEMENT	133
TREASURED TROPHIES	135
BUCKINGHAM'S DORMITORIES	137
THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S HOUSE	143
MRS. BENEDICT	148
BENEDICT'S FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS	159
BENEDICT'S HOUSE	163
ELEVATED LODGINGS	168
THE PLANTER'S HOUSE	171
THE PLANTER'S FIRST FLOOR	175
THE PLANTER'S CHAMBERS	179
"BLESS ME, THIS IS PLEASANT!"	185
THE PARSONAGE	189
FIRST FLOOR OF THE PARSONAGE	193
SECOND FLOOR OF THE PARSONAGE	197
"BEAUTIFUL BERKSHIRE"	200
KING KOLE'S FLOOR PLANS	205

KING KOLE'S BASEMENT	209
ONE OF KING KOLE'S COTTAGES	213
"BY THE WAYSIDE, ON A MOSSY STONE"	219
THE POET'S FIRST FLOOR	221
THE POET'S SECOND FLOOR	225
THE POET'S ABIDING-PLACE	229
PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR	241
BASEMENT PLAN	245
PLAN OF SECOND FLOOR	249
AN ANCIENT WANDERER	256





CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSE THE JUDGE BUILT.



THE Judge had decided to build a house. He is n't a judge at all, but we call him so because he is a justice of the peace, — some sort of county officer, bald-headed and very dignified ; perhaps because of his faultless judgment in the matter of matrimonial selection,

— though I 've known men who exhaust all their wisdom in that one decision and are incurably stupid in other affairs before and forever after. Our Judge is not one of that sort.

It was assuredly time to talk of a new house. They had boarded during the first year or two of their married life, which was a wise thing to do, inasmuch as the bride was not an irreproachable housekeeper either by instinct or training, and a man needs to have his good opinion of his wife confirmed by a genuine acquaintance before it is put to the severe test of sour bread and indestructible pies. For the next two or three years they had lived in tenement-houses ; also a helpful trial, giving an experimental knowledge of the amount of discomfort possible in human habitations. But no sooner did the baby begin to notice that the paper border of the room was a glaring red,

and make big eyes at it, than both fond parents were resolved that the plastic prodigy should have a home of its own wherein its æsthetic development should not be retarded by inharmonious colors on the wall-paper and other barbarisms incident to tenement-houses.

Would I come in and talk over a plan?

Certainly; and the very next evening found me pulling the upper left-hand door-bell.

"Is n't this a new idea of yours?"

"O no! Yes, rather new. I always intended to build some time. There is no special reason why I should begin now, only we can't bear to think of bringing up the boy in a hired house. I remember what happy times we children had in our old home. 'T was n't large or grand, but 't was always home, and I feel that it would be wrong to let him grow up without the same memory of a happy childhood."

Ah! he was a wise judge, and the baby in

his crib attested his paternity by vigorous kicks of applause and a most absurd wrinkling of his tiny old features, which might indicate disgust at his present humble abode, an ecstatic vision of joys to come, or a stomach-ache.

“Where is your lot?”

“Have n’t bought it yet.”

“Nor selected it?”

“No, nor selected it.”

“Excuse me, but we won’t talk about plans at present ; works of imagination are not in my line.”

“O, but it is a very simple matter ; I know just what we need, and while you are preparing the plans I will select a lot.”

“Not at all. I shall do nothing, not so much as think about it, till the lot is secured.”

“But it’s so simple, we have only —”

“Only to waste our time. No, sir ; buy your lot and send for me again. Good night.”

Even a judge is not always wise !

In less than a week the message came. The lot was examined and we sat down to make the sketches. The Judge at one side, his wife at the other, baby asleep within rocking distance, paper, etc., on the table before us.

“Now the truth is,” the Judge began, — a big piece of india-rubber in one hand and a Faber’s No. 2 in the other, — “we need one room, but want that large ; we have but three here, and all together would make scarcely more than one good-sized apartment.”

“It must have a bay-window,” said Mrs. Judge.

“Certainly.”

“A generous one, — large enough to hold a small lounge, some pictures, and other light furniture.”

“Yes ; a big bay and a fireplace.”

“A real fireplace for burning wood, and room for my sewing-machine near one of the windows.”

"Of course, and for your piano and flowers."

"The flowers would go in the bay-window."

"Perhaps; but if you make a conservatory of the bay, what shall we do for the window?"

"I did n't think of that, although if it's large enough there'll be no trouble; and can we have a large mirror somewhere?"

"You *must* have," — this was my first remark, — "and a bureau and a wash-stand and a bedstead and a cooking-stove."

"What! in this room?"

"The drawing-room?"

"Where else, if you have but one?"

"Ah! don't be too literal. Of course we must have a bedroom and a kitchen."

"The bedroom might be up stairs and the kitchen in the basement," said Mrs. Judge.

"Three rooms, one above another? True; but you will need stairs and a hall."

"I suppose so, and I could n't have the kitchen in the basement."

"You will want a dining-room, too."

"Probably."

"And pantries, of course, and one or two spare rooms."

"By all means," said Mrs. Judge, "and a servant's room besides. Then, if the baby lives, he'll want a room before long, pleasant and sunny; and I should think, my dear, you would like a quiet place somewhere for your books and papers, where you can go to be alone."

"To be alone! As though I ever wearied of your company!"

"Not from choice, but you know I'm just a little in the way sometimes when you have very important work to do. Then, I'm liable to have callers; and if you have a sort of 'growlery' to retire to, I'm sure you will enjoy it."

"Your one room has a large and interesting

family already. I suppose the house must be large enough to hold them all. We have, first, *the* room. What shall we call it, — drawing-room ? ”

“ No ; that ’s too grand.”

“ Parlor ? ”

“ Too stiff. Think of living all the time in the parlor ! ”

“ Living-room then, or commonplace sitting-room.”

“ Call it sitting-room.”

“ Very good ; sitting-room, say fifteen by twenty-two feet ; dining-room, thirteen by fifteen feet ; growlery, twelve by thirteen feet ; kitchen, thirteen by fifteen feet ; hall, pantry, and stairway ; — all this on the first floor. On the second floor, four bedrooms as large and as well supplied with closets as possible.”

“ Yes, and that is no more than we need. You know the house faces the east, and there

is a fine southwest view that we cannot afford to shut out. The chambers may be small, except our own, which must be large."

"Of course, for the crib will stand in that."

This was the beginning, indeed it was essentially the whole, of the conference, though the same subject was continued for an hour or more, and finally postponed for future sessions. Beyond contriving the pantry shelves, hanging the doors, and some other minor details, nothing important was developed except the fact, incidentally revealed, that the baby had punctured a new tooth and the plans must be hurried up. I suggested a few more chambers for future contingencies, but the Judge thought that there might be room in the attic for dormitories if more should be needed, — another evidence, by the way, of his good sense. I believe in attic dormitories for boys, when they are high and large, with big cracks in the roof, and plenty of

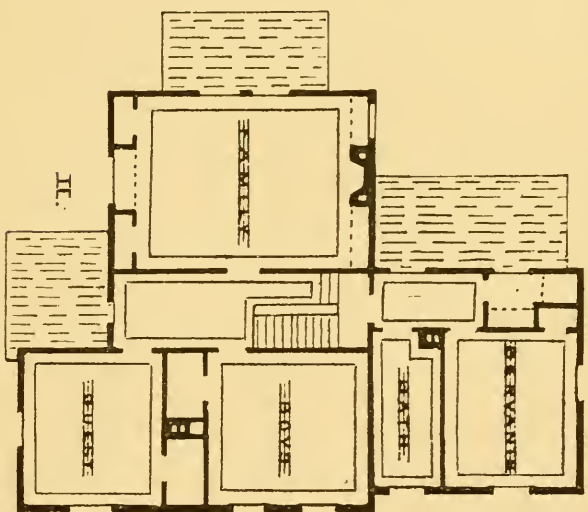
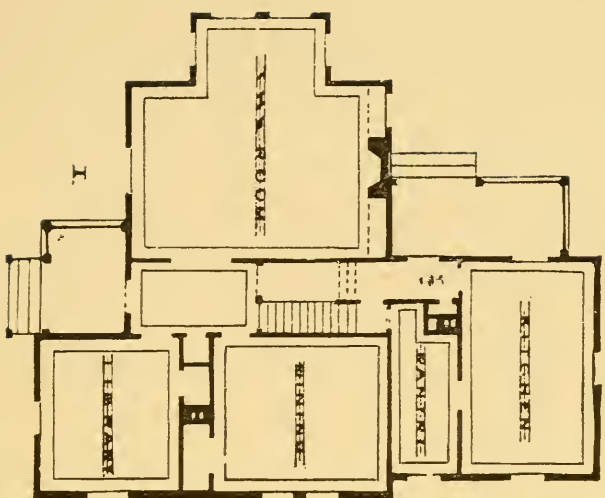
rafters and beams whereon to hang shelves, fix machinery, and try all manner of Yankee-boy experiments. It's the next thing to perpetual camping out, which, as everybody knows, is the only true, safe, and natural way of living, whatever the weather. Ask our soldiers if it is n't. If unfortunate beings who have weak backs and snuffy noses choose to debilitate themselves by sleeping in hot-air furnaces, why there's nothing to be done but wait till they die off, which they will surely do in one or two generations. When the population is thus reduced in quantity and enhanced in quality by the survival of the fittest, there will be no question as to how the bedchambers shall be heated. A small fireplace or an open stove, where a blaze can be lighted in case of sickness or to expel the damp and chill from an unused room, will be all that is required. The tonic of cold air is nature's provision for bracing us against the rigor of

New England winters, if we could learn to respect the thermometer, instead of fearing it. Suppose it were possible to spend one day in Vermont and the next in Florida alternately all winter long, what mortal frame could endure it? Yet that is precisely what we try to do when we stay half the time in the upper rooms of a furnace-warmed house and the other half out of doors.

The plan as arranged gives a hall seven feet wide with a closet at the side, stairs at the farther end, under which is the descent to the cellar. At the left of the hall is the sitting-room, with a bay eleven feet wide, a broad window-seat beside the fireplace, commanding the southwest view, and room for the piano beside the entrance-door. The "growlery" has bookshelves on two sides, and near the chimney a cupboard for fuel below and papers above. The dining-room is lighted by one large square win-

dow ; sideboard is placed at the end next the pantry, where its dignity will be perceived at once on entering the room, and an open stove stands at the opposite end. The pantry contains an ice-chest and manifold other conveniences. The kitchen is twelve by seventeen feet, instead of thirteen by fifteen, and has windows at three sides. Up stairs is the required number of chambers, with a closet for each, and an extra one for the family-room. There is a large linen-press, containing half an acre of shelving, nearly ; and over the pantry a bath-room, warmed by heat from the cooking-stove. The interior being adjusted, I asked the Judge if he had any definite wish as to the outward form of his domicile.

“Only that it be simple and modest, no silly ornamentation meaning nothing, a visible roof, and an appearance of being smaller than it is rather than larger.”



THE JUDGE'S FLOOR PLANS.

What a wise judge he is, to be sure !

"I don't think we shall need any room in the attic, so the roof may be kept down."

Then up spake Mrs. Judge. "O, but we must have square chambers ! I feel stifled in those one-sided, sloping-roofed, cottage bedrooms. There's neither comfort nor taste possible in them. Then it's such a trouble to paper them. If the paper is put on the slanting part the rooms seem top-heavy, and if it is n't they have a bald-headed look !"

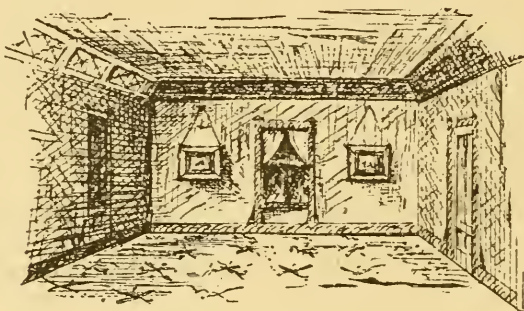
"So has your husband."

"Well, he is n't one-sided."

"Neither need the cottage chambers be so, unless the roof is very low. Let me show you." And I gave her a sketch somewhat like this. "If the rooms are finished, as they may be, alike on all sides, the effect is not unpleasant. On the slanting part at the top the paper may be arranged in panels if you please."

“Won’t they look like drawing-room cars, and won’t they be dreadfully hot?”

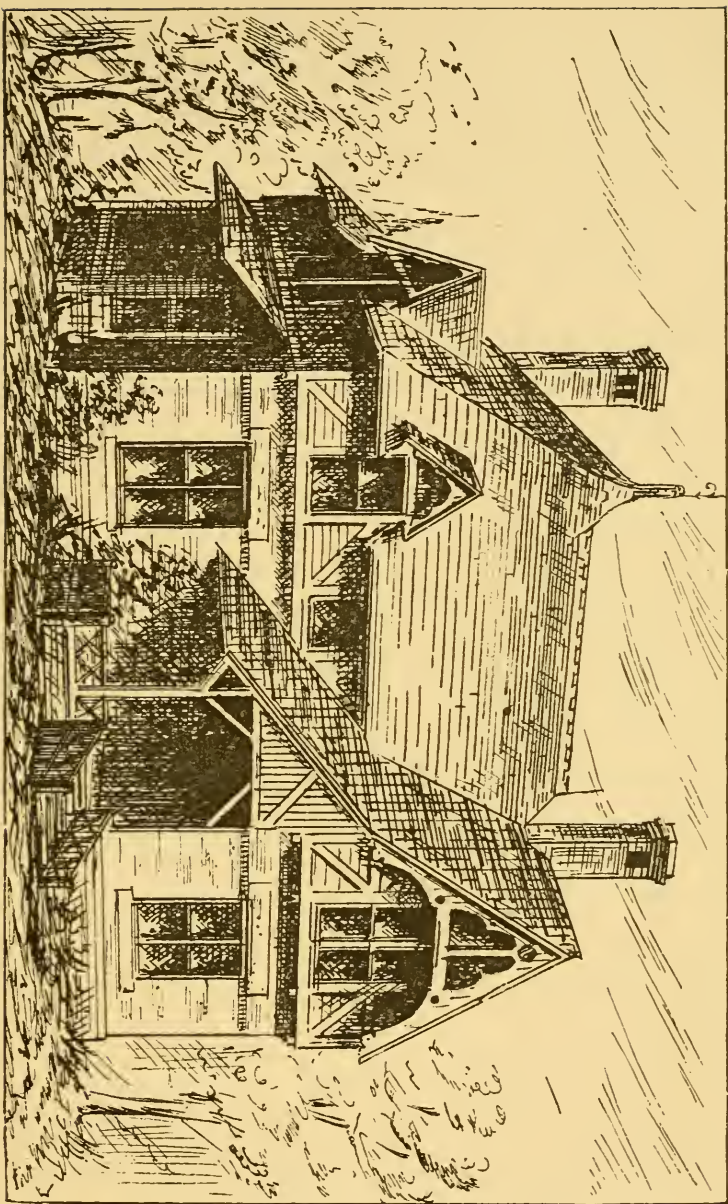
“Drawing-room cars are considered very elegant; each one of them costs twice as much as your whole house. No, they need not be



INTERIOR OF COTTAGE CHAMBER.

hot; but they will be, unless ventilated as their situation requires and common-sense dictates.”

Meantime the Judge pondered the matter, and at last rendered a decision that the chambers might have their corners clipped, provided the slant was not more than sixteen inches in height and the rooms not less than nine feet in the clear.



THE JUDGE'S HOUSE.

To reduce still more the apparent altitude of the house a horizontal division was made by clapboarding the lower part of the outer walls and shingling the upper, a belt of simply cut boarding separating the two styles of finish. The same effect might be more conspicuously produced by building the first story of brick.

In order to be assured as to the probable cost, a descriptive memorandum was prepared and estimates made from the preliminary sketches, by which means the heart-rending process of cutting up and cutting down a complete and irreproachable plan was avoided. The estimates were based on the following memorandum:—

Cellar wall of hard brick, ten inches thick; underpinning, ditto; fireplace in sitting-room and in family-room; two other chimneys, each with two eight-inch-square flues: and all start in cellar.

Spruce frame, balloon style: first and sec-

ond floor joist, two by ten inches; attic, two by eight inches; outside studs, two by five inches; inside, two by four inches; rafters, two by five inches; sills, six by eight inches. Ceiling cross-furred for lathing; double floor in the first and second stories, single in the attic; lining of hemlock; upper floor spruce; hemlock roof-boards; "second-clear" pine for the outside finish, but No. 1 pine clapboards, and best sawed cedar shingles. Inside finish of clear white-pine, simple band mouldings on casings, and moulded base; windows of first and second stories hung with weights, German glass, single. White-pine doors, plain bevelled stiles; those in first story three feet by seven feet six inches; second story, two feet eight inches by seven feet; dark lava knobs in the first story, white porcelain in the second. The cellar is seven feet in the clear; the first story nine feet six inches, the second nine

feet. Excavation was not included ; because the owner chose to dispose of the turf and top soil in his own way, trying a small experiment of landscape-gardening in the grading of the lot, and besides, he had bought a twenty-five-horse-power wheelbarrow and proposed to combine a little muscular training with the artistic study.

The outside was painted two coats in two colors, also the inside finish of the second story. The first was finished with oil and shellac, and *rubbing*, according to orders. The truth is, that the finishing of unpainted woods for common use is not one of the exact sciences. It is easy to find house-painters who can do it better than any other living man,—accepting their own testimony,—but the chances are that the work will either be worthless, or the “filling and finishing” be found to cost more than the wood itself, so that the casings may be said to be of patent filling on a wooden basis. Of

course the safest way is to have specimens of the work prepared beforehand. All of first and second stories to be lathed, and plastered with one coat of brown mortar, finished with dry skim coat. Plumbing not to be included; because the Judge preferred to leave that as a sort of safety-valve or balance-weight; one hundred and fifty dollars would furnish all that is indispensable, but he might have four times that sum to invest. Outside blinds all around and gas-pipe throughout, no paper-hanging or furnace.

The estimates ranged from \$ 3,300 to \$ 3,600 above the foundation. Considering the size and general style of the house, one or two thousand dollars more might well be spent upon it without extravagance.





CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN GEORGE'S PLAN.

BUT you have n't a housekeeper."
"Yet I want a house."
"For speculation?"

"No; to live in."

"Turn hermit, keep bachelor's hall, live on baker's bread, and wash your own dishes?"

"No, no; candidly, it's none of your business, but I hope some time to have a wife, — housekeeper, to use your clumsy phrase. I don't care to proclaim the fact upon the rooftops at present, especially as most people appear to think matrimony and one or two other of the most solemn things in the world were

invented solely for ridicule. I don't object to a joke, when it is a joke, but protest against making the column of marriages, births, and deaths a common theme for impertinent witticism."

"I beg your pardon, my dear fellow ; I won't even pretend that I was n't trying to be funny. It is such an extraordinary thing for a young man to think seriously of building a house for himself before he is ready for housekeeping, — still more wonderful that he should go to an architect for his plans, — that I was betrayed into a joke in order to conceal my surprise. Stupid, of course, and you were quite right to be indignant. Now tell me what kind of a bird-cage you want, and I will help you if I can."

"I don't want a bird-cage, or anything like one. You have n't reached common-sense yet. Until you have, it is useless to waste words. I want a small, comfortable, quiet house to live

in and to make a home. You know the location on the corner of Pine and Elm Streets, facing the south. It must be cut according to the cloth, not on any account to exceed fifteen hundred dollars. That, with the lot, will make my rent equal to two hundred dollars a year, which is all I ought to pay from my salary. Yet I don't want a shanty, or a house lacking all expression of taste and refinement. Show me what is possible for that sum,—that is, if you appreciate my situation, and find anything but food for ridicule in an effort to act honestly and rationally. Do you?"

"I do, solemnly; and do you, George, solemnly promise to love, honor, and—I beg your pardon again. Will you tell me how much you expect for fifteen hundred dollars?"

"No, I have formed no expectations. Give me one good-sized room."

"Good-sized! Rather indefinite."

“Fourteen or fifteen feet wide, sixteen to eighteen long. Adjacent to this a smaller apartment that may be made a part of the larger one by opening a wide door, one other small room for work, a cupboard or two, and stairway. That comprises the first floor. Up stairs there should be at least two good chambers. Can I have all this for that outlay?”

“Undoubtedly. Perhaps something more, if you will be satisfied with the indispensable.”

“You are talking at random again. At best you are more indefinite than I. What do you consider indispensable?”

“A roof, floor, walls, means of keeping dry and warm, strength to resist the elements, materials that your oldest son and heir will find in good condition when it becomes necessary to make additions to accommodate his growing family. That satisfactory?”

“No. If my house keeps me alive and noth-

ing more, it will be a poor investment. It must be a comfort, a strength, a help, — something to cherish and be proud of.”

“Are you sure it’s not the housekeeper, rather than the house, you have in mind? You expect a large return for your investment. The complete fulfilling of your hopes will depend upon, yourself. The most I can promise is, that the house shall not prove an obstacle to your striving for intellectual growth. Your wife will do her own work?”

“I have no wife.”

“Excuse me, when you get one.”

“Should I ever be married, the work usually called housekeeping, if that is what you mean, would doubtless be done by my wife rather than by some ignorant and incapable person boarding in the family. I am not aware, however, that that fact concerns the plan of the house.”

I protested with pathetic meekness that it

was of the utmost concern whether the domestic labor would be performed by the mistress of the house or by a servant. Otherwise I would not venture to ask such a delicate question. Many a house is condemned by one family that just suits another, precisely similar in size and condition, simply because the household arrangements and habits differ. To plan consummately, I should like to know whether the family are musical, whether they have one course or more at dinner, and who will split the kindling-wood and hang out the clothes. The notion that small things make or mar the comfort of our daily lives more often than great ones, finds nowhere better illustration than in the lesser details of a new house. Nine times out of ten, when a complacent householder exhibits his castle to his friends, the points for which he bespeaks especial admiration are the trifling matters that scarcely added a penny to its cost ;

the simple contrivances adapting it to his personal habits, to the special skill or want of skill



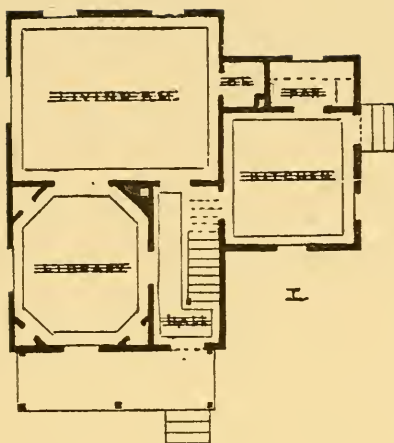
WEDDING IN CHURCH.

that distinguishes his wife from all other women, and to the varying proclivities of his children.

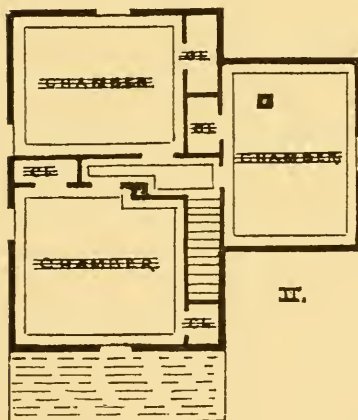
It was impossible to get offended with a

youth of such superhuman dignity and virtue ; so I forgave his testiness, wrestled valiantly with his plan, kept the cost of the house below his appropriation, and it has proved transcendently successful. I was invited to the wedding, and prepared several elaborate speeches for the occasion, but they were married in church without bridesmaids.

The plan gives three chambers instead of two ; and the closets, which he omitted, "just like a man," are all in their places. The rooms of the first story are eight and a half feet high, those of the second story eight feet, but the ceilings are not wholly level, though nearly so. The cellar extends under only one half of the main building. It would cost \$150 to \$200 to add a fourth room in the northeast angle, which might communicate with the kitchen or the front hall, or both, and serve for a dining-room or a bedroom. The library, at the left of the



I.



II.

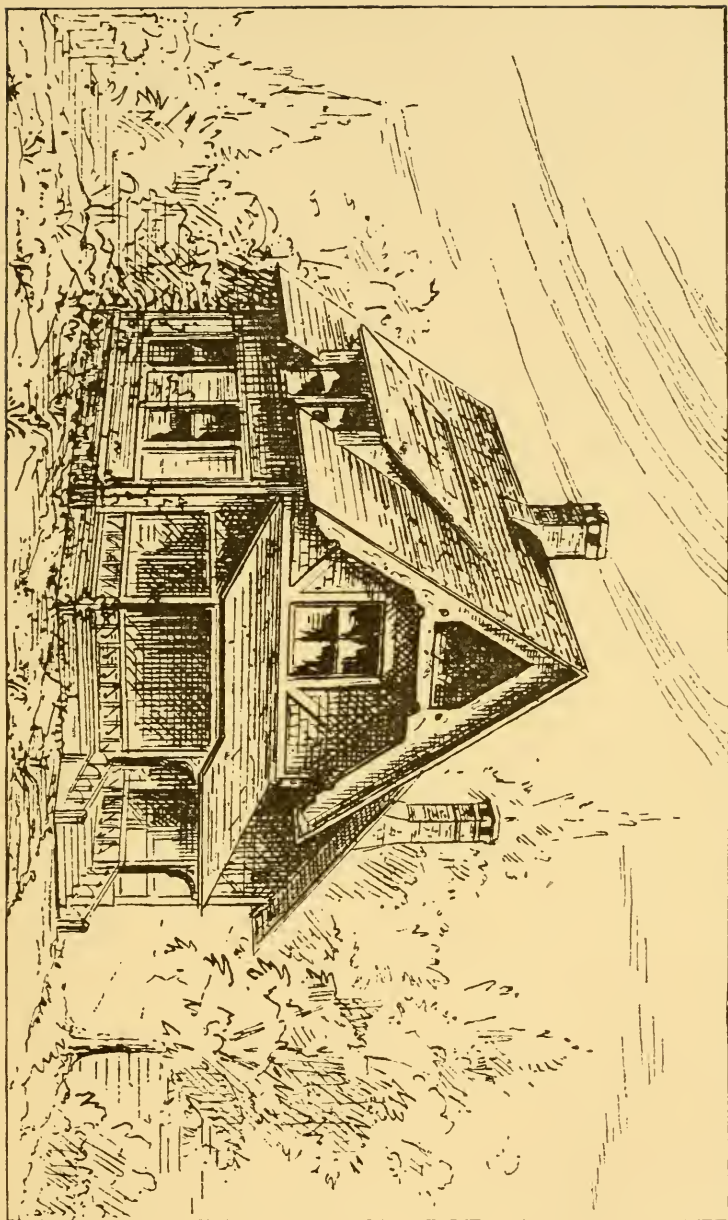
CAPTAIN GEORGE'S FLOOR PLANS.

hall, is twelve feet by fourteen feet. Two of the corners are occupied by book-cases, one contains the chimney, and the fourth affords a closet for the hall. The living-room is fourteen feet by eighteen feet, and the kitchen twelve feet by fourteen. Of course the exterior must be treated with entire simplicity. There is a double dormer on the front roof, one half given to each chamber, and a piazza covers the entrance and the east window. The captain thought it well to contrive the frame so that the south end of this piazza may be enclosed and finished for a bay-window, — an improvement which his housekeeping wife will surely favor. I've no doubt the prospective bay was one of the chief agencies by which she was induced to unite her destiny with that of this dignified young man, for there's no part of a house so dear to the most of womankind as a bay-window.

The outer covering is a mixture of clapboards and vertical sheathing, the latter matched and beaded but not battened. The lower ends of the rafters are planed, and the overhanging ends of the roof-boards are supported and confined by a simple verge-board.

Being located on a corner, the front door was placed at the side without opposition. Indeed, in similar locations, there is no other law than a stupid conventionality against entering at the side, even when not on a corner lot. Filling the entire front portion, which is often the only pleasant side of the house, with the hall, stairs, and rarely used parlor, is one of the ways of house-builders that is past finding out.

I should be extremely sorry to convey an impression of disrespect for this particular client, so far ahead of his young American contemporaries. I'm certain that his course is worthy the imitation of all young men who aspire to



CAPTAIN GEORGE'S HOUSE.

lives of healthful growth and influence ; certain that homes founded on such thoughtful earnestness are the one safe basis of human society, and in no cause do I labor so heartily and patiently.

For all that, our magnetic currents run in opposite directions, and I can't help wondering how his wife ever happened to fall in love with him.



CHAPTER III.

THE HOUSE OF ABRAM.

WHEN Abram came lounging into my office, and five minutes later Elizabeth followed, not lounging, but quite the reverse, I knew the days of dallying were over. He had been building most unromantic air-castles for six months or more, and came in, once a week, upon an average, to ask if I had any plans for a square house. "Four rooms on a floor, you know, — eh? Hall in the middle clear through the house, folding-doors, bay-windows; kitchen, buttery, and back stairs in the L. Something to cost just \$6,000, not another cent, — eh?"

Then he would pull out all the elevations in my portfolio, and criticise and comment on their possible fitness to his wants, without the slightest regard to the shape or arrangement of the floor-plans. He enjoyed the pictures, and I enjoyed his amusement, but made no attempt to put myself in his place until Elizabeth appeared on the scene. Then I felt it in my bones that the ideal was about to become the actual. If the right plan could not be found, it must be made without delay.

“Have you found a plan that suits, Abram?”

“Eh? A plan that suits? How do I know what will suit you? Yes; plenty of ’em. I’m easily suited. The old house is good enough for me. How’s that for high?”

He held up a perspective sketch of an irregular cottage with tower, steep roof, basement, etc. A subject quite too pretty for slang, but as far from the conventional square house as possible.

“ I don’t like it at all, — not for us. You know what we want. We want a square house with a hall in the centre eight feet wide, two rooms fifteen feet square at each side. In the L I want a kitchen and back stairs and pantry and store-room and a wash-room, and chambers for the servants. Then, of course, there will be four chambers in the main building. Here ’s something like it.”

Drawing forth a plan of the character described, she immediately sat down to examine it. It was not completely adapted to her ideas, but gave us what is always needed in such preliminary arrangements, — something definite for discussion, to approve or to condemn, as the case may be. Something to build imaginary wants around, from which to prune away whatever seems needless. Like a yellow primrose, a house is to many people a house and nothing more. Yet when a man has risen far enough

above the plane of the cave-bear period to want a *home*, he is apt to have some positive opinions about its interior adjustment. Even abstract and impracticable theories are better than nothing, better than that benighted stupidity which attempts to rate the value of a plan from a purely commercial standard. Is it an evidence of innate and universal superiority that women, if they comprehend a plan at all, are likely to have a deeper insight than men?

After studying the sketch before her for a time and noting its merits and defects, Elizabeth concluded that a house forty feet square, with a wing of indefinite size, would be just equal to the emergency. Taking a fresh sheet of paper I drew the outlines accordingly, sketched the hall eight feet wide through the middle, and at her dictation marked off the two fifteen-foot-square rooms at the left side for library and sitting-room. At the right the parlor, oc-

cupying the front corner, was to be fifteen by twenty-four feet, and behind that the dining-room fifteen by twenty. When these four rooms were shown on paper it was disclosed, to Elizabeth's dismay, that, instead of being forty feet square, her house would be thirty-two feet at one side and forty-six at the other. The equilibrium was finally restored by adding a small dressing-room behind the sitting-room, and turning the dining-room one quarter around, making a break in the main wall of the building on that side. To keep the balance true, a two-story bay-window was thrown out from the sitting-room and the chamber above. By this time we were tired and hungry and adjourned for refreshment. Abram had smoked two cigars, exhibited three more totally inadequate elevations, and enlivened the occasion by inquiring if we'd "got the folding-doors in yet,—eh?" Which we had, three pairs of them, whereby three

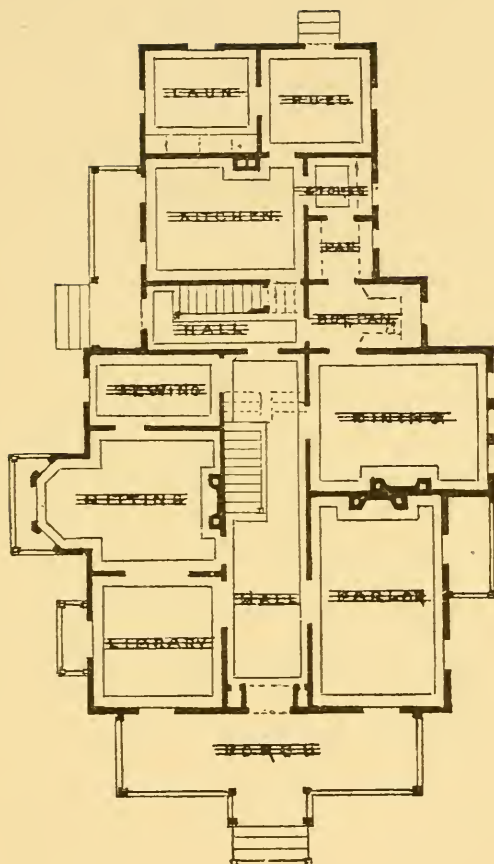
of the rooms and the hall could be thrown together.

On resuming the work after dinner, Abram was greatly distressed because the stairs were not to be made in a single straight run. He hated this "wriggling around." "How's a fellow to know when he's got up to the top if he has to keep stopping and then starting off in another direction?" I was glad to make a landing seem unavoidable even a few steps from the top; would have liked it much better half-way down. If the staircase were straight, it's true a wide landing might be made midway; but although this may afford the same room for rest and a fresh start, it is not half so restful in appearance nor as much so in fact. It even becomes a sort of obstacle in descending, especially in the dark. Then, too, we all have a certain amount of gymnastic practice on account of finding, at the top or bottom of the stairway, one step more or less

than we expect. Not to mention the doubling of the chances for this, it is not altogether safe when it happens half-way from the first to the second floor.

Whether to make the back stairs open or close was a question. They would look better unenclosed, but in that case must always be swept and garnished,—that is, carpeted,—which would make additional work and expense. These added burdens were finally assumed, as is usual, for the sake of the better show. After this decision, it's my impression that a stairway behind the back stairs was proposed, somewhere in the laundry, but ultimately vetoed as liable to lead to still another quite out-of-doors behind the house.

During the study of the rear portion, Abram slept peacefully — not exactly with his fathers, but on a very hard lounge in the office; rousing at last in response to Elizabeth's call to come and see if it was all right, and giving a



ABRAM'S FIRST FLOOR.

sleepy approval, "provided it don't cost more than six, you know."

"But it will."

"Cut it down, then."

"How ridiculous, Abram! We can't cut it down; there's no more room than we need."

"I don't mean cut down the house, cut down the cost."

"Can we reduce the cost without spoiling the house? How much will it cost as it is? Can it be built for \$7,000?"

"Six, six."

"Keep still."

"Yes; it can be built for \$5,000; its cost above that sum depends upon yourselves."

"Make it cost five, then."

"Be quiet, Abram."

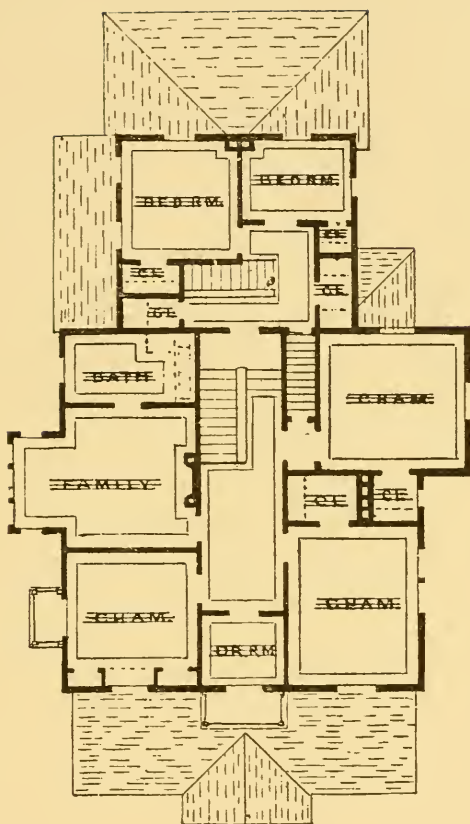
"I mean, it may be made safe, comfortable, and durable for that sum, but it would n't at all suit your tastes and aspirations. It would

be wholly unlike the houses you most admire and wish to emulate. What are called modern conveniences would be omitted. You might be obliged to have board partitions in the second story and leave the wood-work unfinished ; gravel roof, may be, and common — ”

“ O dear ! that ’s worse than the Pilgrims and the heathen.”

“ Don’t confound the venerated Pilgrims with the ungodly heathen ; it would not, moreover, be at all worse, but vastly superior to either. Even if it were not, it would still be an open question whether we can show any better home results with all our civilized improvements.”

Whereat Abram yawned, Elizabeth asked again how much it would cost, and I again made answer : “ Just as much as you please. All that goes into it above five or six thousand dollars goes for conveniences, comforts, luxuries. Whatever you call them, they are



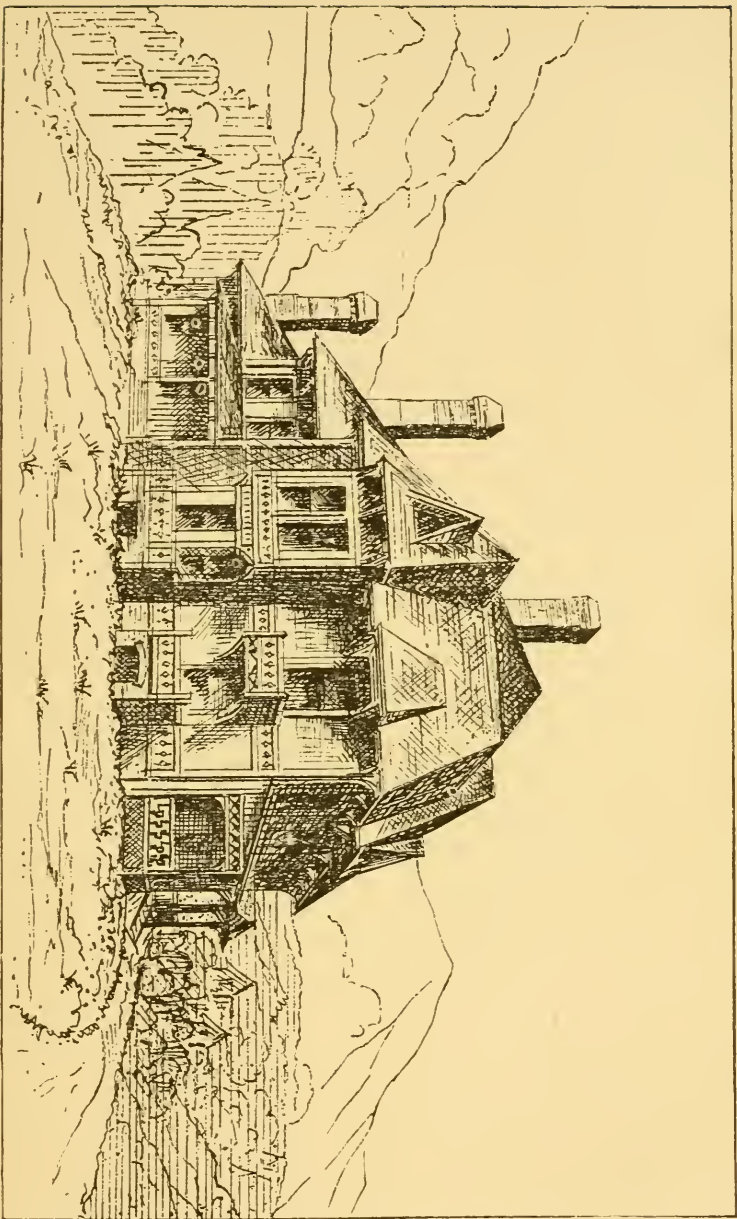
ABRAM'S SECOND FLOOR.

not indispensable, and, when you once begin upon them, no mortal can tell where you will stop if your purse holds out. It's not a question of finance, but of morals."

Abram yawned again in an appreciative way, and Elizabeth repeated her assertion that there was none too much room, and the sooner the house was begun the sooner it would be paid for, which was happily true in their case, but, alas! not always so. There is no more senseless question to ask than if a house of a given size can be built for a given sum. Of course, always; no matter what the size or the sum. I know a certain quality of work, a certain mode of construction, are assumed; but such assumption is not only groundless, it is insolent. It asserts that owners have no original thoughts, and workmen no other than the cheap skill of empty-headed imitation. In most cases there are, or ought to be, two fixed quantities,

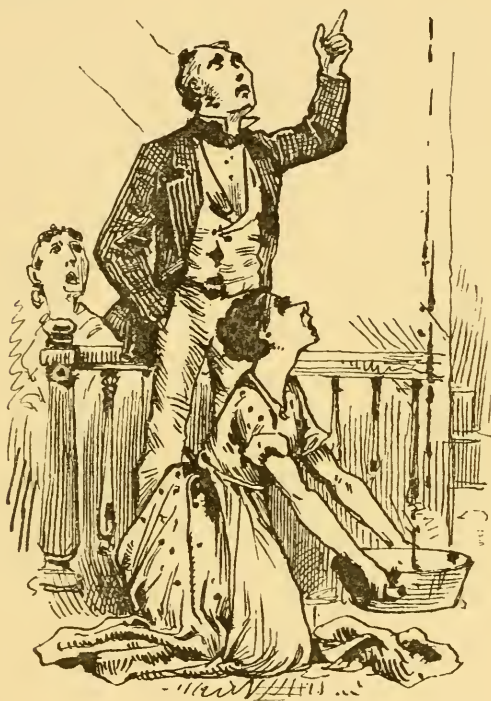
— the sum to be expended and the amount of room to be obtained. The movable weight that adjusts the balance between these two is *the character of the work*; and this is variable as the moon, — variable as the moods of a child, the appetite of a dyspeptic, or the national currency.

Not only did Abram spend his stipulated “six,” but his energetic wife added at least an equal sum for those refinements of comfort and grace that are so enticing to the imagination and so delightful in reality. There was a thousand dollars’ worth of marble, lead pipes, copper tanks, and silver-plated stop-cocks, called in the aggregate “plumbing”; there was walnut finish, there was finish of ash and chestnut; there were hard-wood floors, and inside shutters with panelled boxings; there were mantels of white marble and black marble and imitation marble; book-cases built into the library; and, upon



ABRAHAM'S HOUSE.

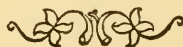
the outside, various balconies, and cosey corners that were charming enough, but not at all indispensable.



STOPPING A LEAK.

The two-story bay was a bone of contention. Elizabeth wanted it "eight-sided," Abram square, "Square as a brick." By a satisfactory com-

promise, both were suited, the two forms being combined in one. The roof was high. When Abram saw the plan he exclaimed, "Why, why! How's that? I don't own so far in that direction. You'll ruin me with such a roof. Cut it down, cut it down!" But a high roof, if one does feel at liberty to occupy upwards, often costs no more than a flat one, so that even though the space enclosed is not needed, it is wisest and best. Immeasurably so if we take into account the loss of temper and good morals generally when the melting snows and leaking gutters send down and spread abroad their dripping, drizzling stains that defy all the tin pans and old rags in the house!





CHAPTER IV.

MR. JOHN SMITH'S HOUSE.



MR. SMITH is a sober, industrious mechanic ; has an active brain and a fluent tongue ; not famous as a scholar, but somewhat renowned as a philosopher. He wanted advice concerning a new house, and would talk till midnight if he found a patient auditor. He introduced the subject in this wise : —

“ My wife she ain’t comfortable ; she wants a new house. Wal, fact is, I do too. Folly ! Can’t afford to build what we ’d like to, but there ’s no use talkin’. ’T won’t be nothin’ but worry and fret till she haves a parlor as

big and harnsome as any of our neighbors. I 'm sure I don't know what the world 's a comin' to ; a man 's got to work himself to death to keep his head out of water, 'specially if he wants his family to be thought anything of. It don't make no kind of dif'rence how much we have or how much we git, there 's always something more we want just as bad. First it 's a chromo, and then it 's a cookin'-stove. Mrs. Stiver 's been and put some velvet curtains up to her bow-winder, and all 't saves me is because there's no such winder in the house, and my wife she ain't quite sure as it 'll do to put 'em up to a common one. I s'pose we 'shall hev to hev foldin'-doors and a bow-winder and p'raps a cupalow. But I can tell you one thing, I 'm bound to have a bath-room if I don't have nothing else. I may n't be quite so godly as some folks, but I mean to try to keep clean. Never had one yit, but I 'm goin' for the conveniences.

The girls has got some idees, too, on the subject, and takin' all things into account I expect we've got to build quite a house, — a good deal of room and something for show. As I said afore, I don't know what the world's a comin' to. We brag about our new improvements and all them things, but folks don't take half the comfort they use to."

Decidedly Smith has a lively tongue. I had no alternative but to take the floor and keep it.

"Mr. Smith, if we should ever become that free and happy people whose God is the Lord, it will be after a few generations of culture in the way of learning our own genuine needs and honestly striving to fill the same, regardless of the customs of the publicans and sinners. We foolishly try to lift the burdens of life by the short arm of the lever. The ultimate aim of all our legislation, our social reform, our praying and evangelizing, our scientific research

and artistic study, the end for which we watch and work and fight and die, is happier homes, — truer, holier human lives. We build churches, we sustain governments, we apply vast sums of wealth, won by selfish greed or business cunning, to institutions designed to foster mental and moral culture ; we make our mightiest efforts, good and bad, to elevate men and women who all the time sit in helpless inactivity on the remotest end of the long arm of the lever wherewith we would move the world. If we could but take hold of them where they live, in their homes, the glorious work would be done forever. The wheels of time would fly so swiftly round that the welcome day would burst upon us in a dazzling blaze of glory !”

Premonitory glimpses of the coming brightness made Smith blink like an owl by daylight. I came down a step or two and continued :—

“ Without doubt it would be pleasant to you,

as to most intelligent men and women, to find yourself in permanent possession of a house worth \$25,000, the same suitably furnished and located in that particular paradise whose corner lots seem most desirable. But such houses don't grow on blackberry-bushes, and, however commendable the ambition of young America to spend at least two terms in the White House, I'm inclined to think that the sooner a man resolves to limit his desires, in the way of a house, to such a one as he can reasonably hope to own without sacrificing the best part of his life for it, the longer and the happier he will live. I don't advise you to fling away ambition. What would become of the bird of freedom without this spirit? Did not Willis, with sublime contempt of logic, invite us to 'press on, for it hath tempted angels'? Aspire with all your might to every conceivable earthly fame and heavenly glory,

but fix in your mind the amount and quality of room needful for your domestic bliss, and then, with an upright, downright resolve that you don't care a pin whether it suits your neighbors, friends, or relatives, just plant yourself on the rock of your own common-sense and let the heathen rage ! ”

I used some big words and made long sentences, but Smith listened with open countenance and took the drift of my discourse sufficiently to hope I had n't “got no objections to his sleeping in a bed like a Christian, and letting his folks wear posies in their bunnets when posies was in fashion.” Admitting the weight of the argument underneath his mild irony, I resumed :—

“When a number of men work at the same place and in the same way, they must observe the same hours ; break their nightly fast, dine and sup, very nearly at the same time. In vari-

ous other matters it is inevitable that the daily life of multitudes should be quite similar. When we enter upon the domain of individual thought and character, unanimity is neither possible nor desirable. The only people who think alike are those who don't think at all. They alone have identical tastes who depend upon fashion-plates and other arbitrary guides. Nothing can be more evident than the fact that a woman whose dress is always in the prevailing mode can have no original good taste. Her dress-maker may be a person of ability. She is a dummy.

“The only safe and wise course for you and your family is to examine carefully your personal needs in the way of house-room and furnishing, rejecting as an inexcusable impertinence any suggestion based on the tastes and customs of your neighbors.”

“What's the use of livin', if you can't do as other folks doos?”

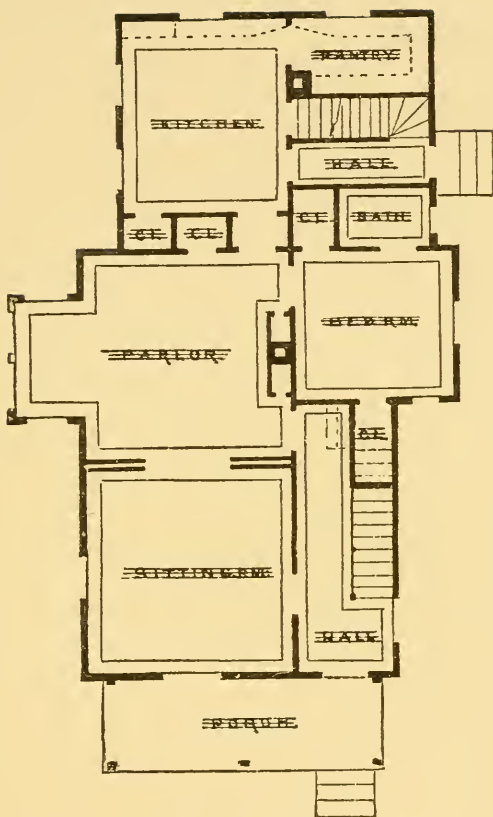
“Good heavens! What’s the use of living, if you can only do as other folks do? If you cannot offer an original idea, perform an independent act, or think a new thought, the sooner you die the better. Your room is worth more than your company. It’s impossible for any man of sense to feel the slightest interest in you. I’d sooner chop wood than make plans for you, — or turn grindstone!”

Smith rose to the occasion. He restrained his wrath and replied as became a philosopher and a Christian : —

“Wal, I s’pose you’d ruther chop wood than starve.”

Which was a soft answer and a true one. So I made his plans with plenty of room and plenty of show, — relatively speaking, — adapted to his supposed needs and those of ninety-nine thousand others like him.

The house contains the irreproachable front



JOHN SMITH'S FIRST FLOOR.

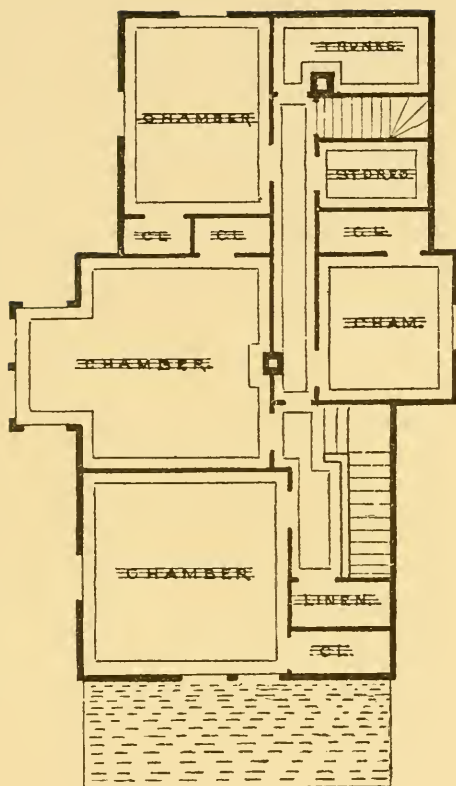
hall and petted front stairs (I tried to turn them around, but he refused to "go up stairs backwards"); the orthodox parlor with delectable sliding-doors into the sitting and dining-room; the respectable family-room with a closet for *paterfamilias*, ditto for *mater*; cabbage cut-off between kitchen and dining-room when it is used as a dining-room; the adorable back stairs; the accommodating side entrance, toward which muddy boots instinctively turn; the coveted bath-room, chief station on the heavenward route; the indispensable cellar and a hospitable pantry. Four aristocratic chambers, three useful store-rooms, and closets enough to hold at least a change of garments and the winter blankets, fill the second story. The chambers over the kitchen are wholly in the roof, and the corners are clipped, but the others have level ceilings. They are eight and a half feet in the clear, the rooms below being nine feet.

When I exhibited sketches with the first story of brick and the second of wood, Smith was dumb with amazement. Finding speech at last, he remarked with great decision, "No,



MRS. SMITH AND HER CHARMING DAUGHTERS.

sir. You don't ketch me in any half-an'-half operation. If I build a brick house, it'll be a brick house; and if 't ain't nothin' but wood, then wood it is. My wife she won't like it nuther; besides, I can't afford to build a brick



JOHN SMITH'S SECOND FLOOR.

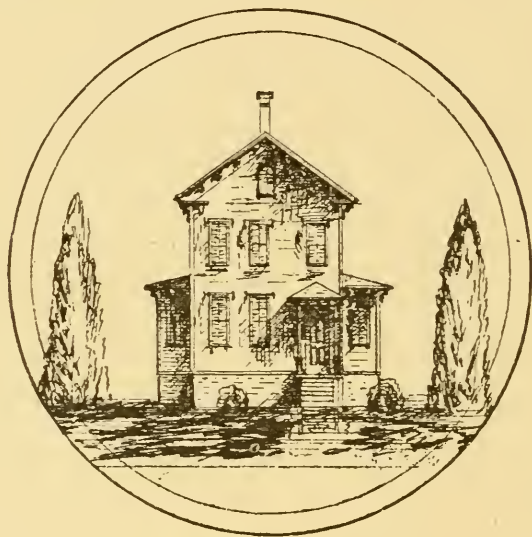
house, not even the lower half on 't. Fact is, I've allers been kinder sot on a two-story house with green blinds and them sort of fix-in's under the eaves," — meaning scroll-sawed brackets.

"Well, show the pictures to Mrs. Smith, and get her opinion before giving them up."

"'T ain't no use, she won't like 'em."

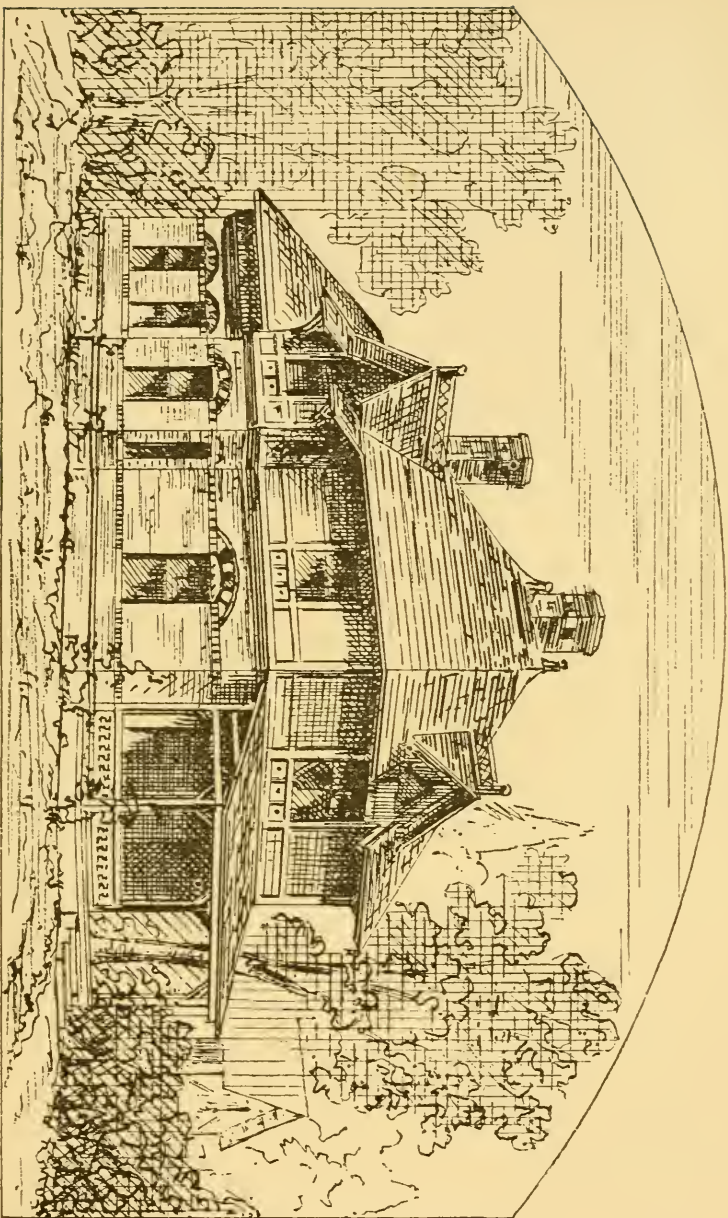
Now it happened that Mrs. Smith aspired to lead the architectural fashion in her neighborhood, but had n't the first notion as to how it could be done, — a representative woman, you see, one of the world's benefactors if rightly managed. These people who "keep a graspin' arter things that's neither here nor yonder" have a mission. Without their erratic support genius would often go supperless to bed. John Smith is wiser than his wife, yet he wanted the conventional shell; she would have accepted a Chinese pagoda or an Egyptian tomb for

the sake of notoriety, and thereby made a way for an honest effort to improve the old tiresome pattern of which in Massachusetts alone there are about nine millions. No power of



JOHN SMITH'S BEAU IDEAL.

logic could convince her that a simple brace, supporting the overhanging roof, is in better taste than the seven-horned dragons that are supposed to perform that office ; but her house was to be different, newer style as she thought,



MRS. SMITH'S ADMIRATION.

and that was enough. The arguments of warmer in winter, cooler in summer, no paint, plenty of rose-bushes, etc., were quite superfluous. Of course she convinced her husband; and the only objection he suggested was the extra cost. This by careful estimate would not exceed one hundred and fifty dollars. On learning this fact he at once inquired, "Why not make the whole house of brick?" to which I could only say that the added expense would be proportionately greater, on account of the thicker walls required, and, other things being equal, the exterior effect not so good. As to the cost, an average mechanic beginning life with his clothes, his trade, and his tools, who finds steady work for average pay, marries an average house-keeper, introduces to this vale of woe an average number of unusually interesting children, who is reasonably temperate and industrious, but not negligent of current political, literary,

and social events and duties, can pay for such a house in eight years, — which is only one year more than half as long as Jacob served for a single item of his domestic outfit.





CHAPTER V.

THE HOME OF THE PROFESSOR.



WHEN a man says he does n't know what sort of a house he wants, — something new and cheap and handsome, — can't tell till he sees it, — I'm provoked by his helplessness. He has no call to build a house at all. These are the clients who make domestic architecture a trial of the flesh and a weariness of the spirit, for they are never suited, and there is no end to their requirements. On the other hand the profession rises to the dignity and enjoyment of fine art when exercised in behalf of a man of sense and sensibility. I would rather dig ditches for a

philosopher than build palaces for a fool. When a wise man would build him a home, which is better than a palace, I anticipate my duty with a fervent delight.

So I responded eagerly to the Professor's request for an interview, swept and garnished my office, perfumed it with myrrh and frankincense, dusted my garments, decked my hair, and sharpened my pencils.

He had bought his lot. He knew by ample experience what scale of housekeeping must be maintained; he was ready to define the size and use of every room; he had fixed the limit of cost: in short, the Professor knew what he wanted. He came in a chariot, bringing his wife with him, just as I expected, — a wise man in grave emergencies always regards the counsels of his wife.

“There,” said the Professor, producing a half-sheet of foolscap, “is the skeleton of our castle

in Spain. You may blow it away with a breath, but it is the substance of things hoped for. Concerning our wants we are quite clear as to what and why ; *how* we shall secure them is for you to answer. How the rooms shall be grouped, how the walls shall be constructed, how the openings arranged, how the whole shall be clothed, and how be built for our proposed expenditure, are questions for the architect. What and why belong to us ; *how* we leave to you."

This struck me as a concise statement of the whole duty of architects, and I prepared to receive instructions.

"We will begin with the library, a room not less than sixteen by twenty feet. It will be a sort of common sitting-room, containing our collection of books, pictures, and casts, — things that we like to have around us every day. Comfortable furniture for use, and a fireplace

for good cheer in cold weather. It is essentially a social room, not to be monopolized by my sermon-making or my wife's millinery, both literary in different directions. Library is in fact a misnomer, but 'art gallery' would be still more inaccurate; though we wish to make it artistic, in a quiet, homelike way. After the library a parlor, or 'reception-room,' if you have scruples against a parlor."

"There is no objection to a parlor in itself. This is what I protest against; filling the largest and may be the pleasantest room in the house with furniture too nice to be commonly used, and only displayed on state occasions when your mind is kept in a mixed state of exultation at the grand parade and worry lest something be injured. If your idea of a library is realized, that room will afford your guests far more enjoyment than the parlor."

"Undoubtedly, and my friends will never

complain of being excluded from it. But I hope there will be frequent occasions when it will not hold them all. This parlor may be smaller than the library, should be near to it, across the hall perhaps, being an extra provision in respect to room for Alumni gatherings and other hospitable times. It would also be useful in a more private way as a reception-room when the library is occupied. These two, by virtue of their dignity, must be placed in the front of the house. Next in rank is the 'nursery,' say fifteen feet square. I've noticed that, in homes blessed with many children, either the young folks or the old folks suffer a constant martyrdom. The house is turned topsyturvy by the children, or the children are extinguished by the housekeeper. The remedy consists in providing a room for the sole use and behoof of the younger members. They must not be sent to the attic or basement, or

to any inferior, out-of-the-way place. I would rather give them the parlor, but wherever the room is, it must be of the indestructible sort."

"Would n't it be better to teach the children good manners?"

"Good sense and good habits by all means. I would n't have their fingers always so clean as to leave no stain on a white wall; I should be sorry to hear them talking so softly over their play that no one would be disturbed in the room; I would n't ask them to leave their boots on the door-step, or have them forget how to roll on the floor. Their room must be light and cheerful. It must contain cupboards and drawers for books and toys, and the closets for hats, coats, and boots should be near. I would have the walls wainscoted to the height of three or four feet, and wood-work that will not scratch or soil easily. The dining-room should be about fourteen feet wide, not less

than eighteen long, and I prefer a broad light at one end only. As the laundry will be in the basement, the kitchen need not be large, but pantries and store-rooms should be ample, and a side entrance-hall containing back stairs is indispensable."

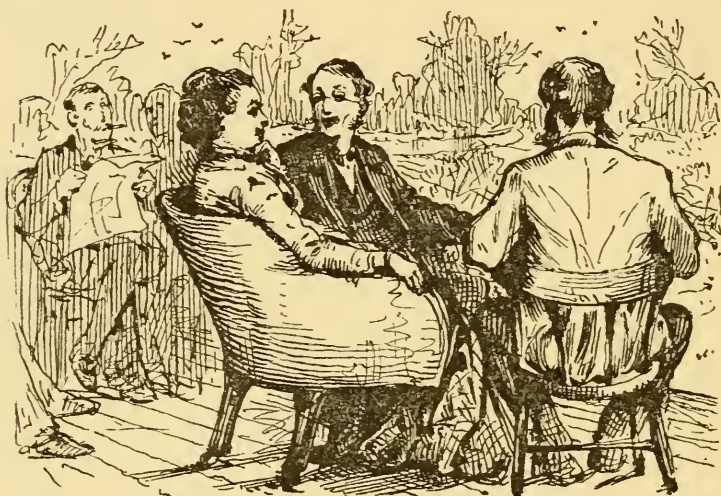
Here the Professor paused, and invited his wife to continue the exercises by describing the chambers, which she declined doing, having no ambition for public speaking.

"I suppose the arrangement of the first story determines to a certain extent that of the second. The two rooms for the children must have direct communication with our own room as well as with the hall."

"That is on my account," said Mrs. Professor.

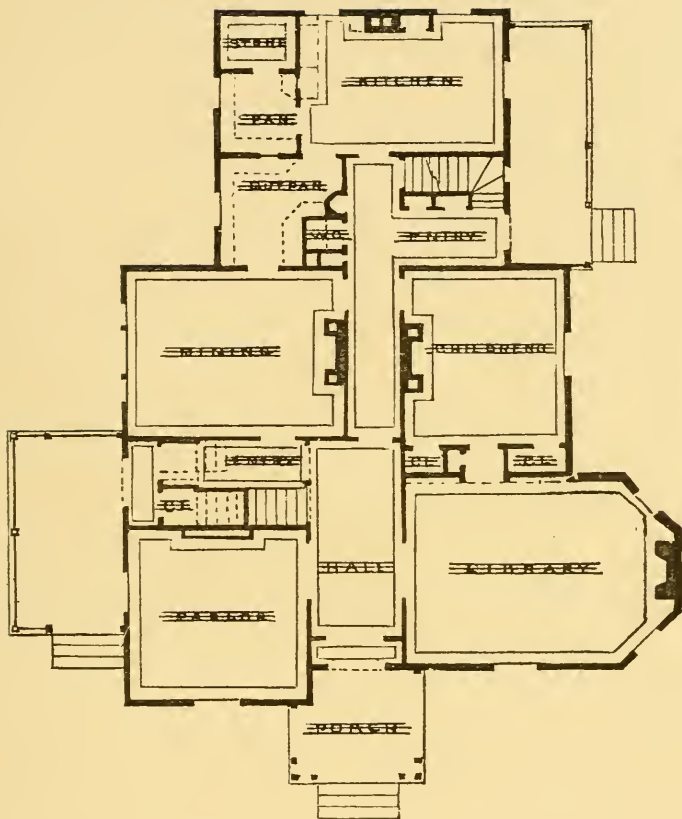
"Yes, that is by special request of my wife, to enable her to visit the children during the night in case the house should happen to be

occupied by burglars in my absence. She will also give orders for the fitting up of closets and cupboards, drawers, shelves, and all the little handy nooks and corners in which her soul de-



A GROUP OF EASY-CHAIRS.

lights. A front porch is a thing of course. At the east side, where the views are finest, we want a large square veranda, not a ropewalk, a tantalizing strip of balcony barely sufficient for a man to walk back and forth or for a single



THE PROFESSOR'S FIRST STORY.

row of seats, but large enough for a dozen people to group about in easy-chairs without danger of falling off the edges. Summer afternoons this will be the most valuable room in the house. One other room I would like if possible, — a sky-parlor, a den in the top of the house for my own exclusive benefit when I sigh for solitude, so far away that no one will visit me except on urgent business. With these few remarks we will leave you to your own devices, trusting that nothing essential will be omitted.”

Doubtless many essentials were omitted, for the perfect house has not yet arrived ; still, I tried to carry out the instructions so clearly given, and to make such additions and improvements as seemed practicable. The calm retreat in the attic, remote and inaccessible, was not forgotten, though it does not appear in the plans given here ; neither does the laundry,

which was underneath the pantries, making compact and safe plumbing, and allowing a dumb-waiter to communicate directly with bath-room in second story. The necessity for the secret passage between the family and the children's rooms crowded the staircase away from the outer wall, but it prepared the way for a small lobby on the first floor, and the stairs are abundantly lighted by a large square window of translucent glass. The turn in the hall is a triple blessing ; it prevents the direct channel through the centre of the house from north to south, which would be intolerable in cold weather, the front door being toward the north ; it puts the stairs in a modest and becoming situation ; and it gives a most attractive access to the charming east veranda.

“What sort of roof do you propose?”

“I don't propose. That and everything else relating to outward appearance belongs to the

architect. Even if I do not fancy your design, I shall trust your taste rather than my own; but please remember this positive stipulation: the house must be built, plumbing, furnace, grading, everything complete, for the sum I have named, or it will not be built at all. I do not even want the plans made, if its cost will exceed that limit."

"But how am I to know whether it will or not?"

"Ah! that's the architect's duty, isn't it? At all events it's a point I would like to understand before ordering the plans. I can no more agree to pay an indefinite price for a new house than for any other piece of property. Is it unreasonable to require an architect to guarantee that the execution of a design shall not exceed a given sum?"

"Not if you will promise to be content with his plans and details, and not crowd to the verge

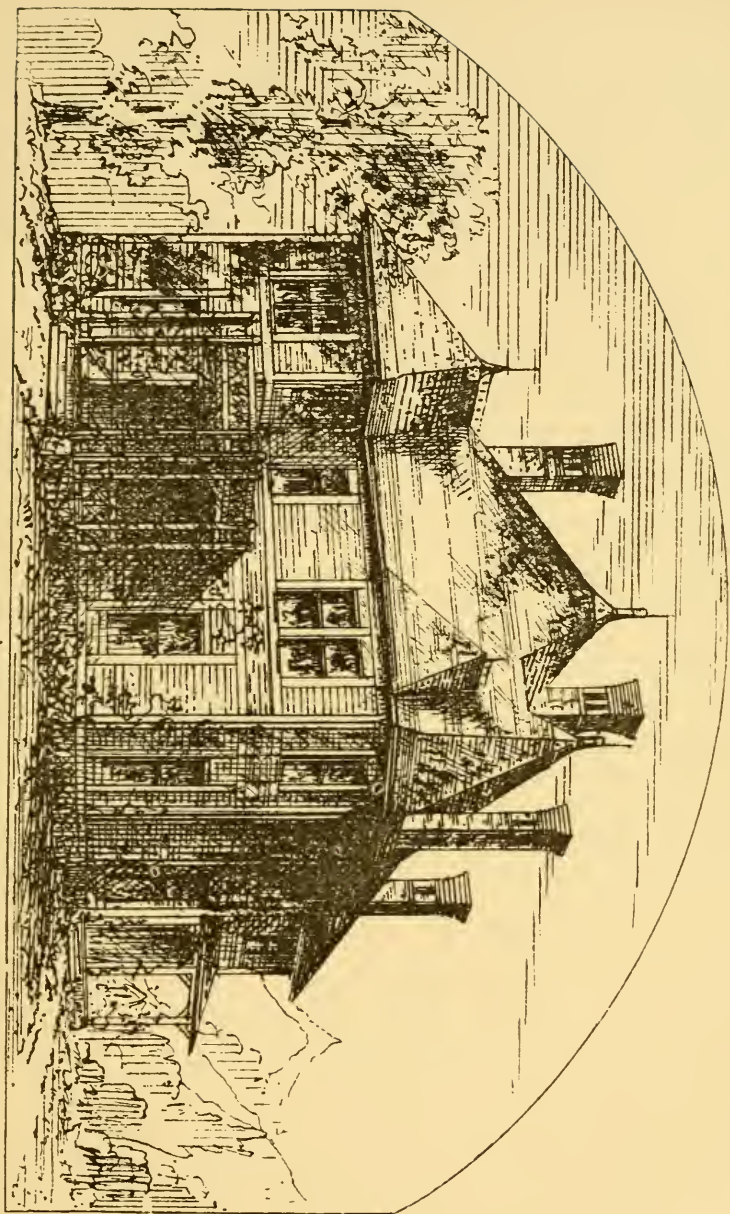
of impossibility in your requirements. The actual value of materials and the probable cost of labor may, however, be closely estimated after the plans and specifications are minutely prepared."

"Yes, that's the point. Must I begin by making an investment of several hundred dollars for plans, with no certainty that it will not be thrown away?"

"You must venture something. A small sum will furnish sketches describing the size and style of your building, and an abstract of specifications can be written indicating briefly, in general terms, what you wish to attempt. On these, estimates may be based showing what is possible; and, having ascertained that the house will not prove a precursor of bankruptcy, you can refine and expatiate to the last degree of accuracy."

"Suppose, after all this refining and specifying, the estimates are still too large."

THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE.



“It is then the fault of the architect, and it is his duty to revise and modify the plans until they can be executed as required ; provided, of course, the owner does not insist upon many changes and additions.”


In order to avoid an increase of appropriation it was necessary to build wholly of wood, and to adopt a simple style of finish, both within and without. But necessity is sometimes the wisest and best of friends. It is often pleasant to change the form of a house for the sake of outward grace or picturesqueness ; but elaborate workmanship and profuse decoration have, in themselves, but little power either to help by their presence or to injure by their absence.





CHAPTER VI.

LUCIA'S CASTLE.

NE day as I sat meditating — not smoking — suddenly there came a tapping as of some one gently rapping. Of course it was a lady ; men don't knock at office doors. So I rose hastily, gave an extra twist to my mustache, shook the dust from my coat-collar, glanced at my finger-nails, and opened wide the door, assuming my sweetest smile and most respectful attitude. It was Lucia Aurora, and with a stately salutation, worthy of a duchess, she swept through the doorway, perched upon an office chair, perched and sat, and thus addressed me : —

“ We come to you —

Threescore and ten of us —

Not a farthing in our purse ;

What shall be done for us

Poor old maids ?

to you, a genteel gentleman, to propose to you — to help us toward the chiefest goal of all wise, womanly ambition, a comfortable home.”

In undisguised amazement I looked around for the rest of the goodly company, the remaining threescore and nine.

“ As a representative I come,” quoth she, “ not only for threescore and ten, but three hundred score, my poor, dear, blessed old-maid sisters, who are longing, hoping, praying for a home.”

“ Bless me !” said I, and sank into another chair.

“ We are not ambitious or exacting, our wants are few but pressing, our tastes simple but re-

fined ; we ask for neatness, not magnificence ; for beauty and honesty, not for wealth."

I began to turn pale, for my comeliness, my honesty, and my poverty are alike conspicuous.

"I am aware," continued the duchess, "that this sharp statement of our wishes and intentions may require time for consideration on your part, as it surely has received much on ours ; we have pondered it long and well, our hearts are fixed, we are resolved to have a home, and we make our first appeal to you."

What wonder that I was speechless ! I, a respectable old father in Israel, without the faintest shadow of an expectation or wish to change my domestic relations ! When my poor, lisping, stammering tongue was able to respond, I began thus deprecatingly : "You cannot doubt that I would most gladly assist you and those you represent to the attainment

of your natural and worthy ambition, but really and truly, of eligible young men, who would answer your requirements, I do not know a single dozen, much less three hundred score."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Lucia, "it's a house I'm talking about, not a husband. Do you suppose I expect to find several thousand men, married or single, old or young, who are simple and refined in their tastes, neat, honest, and good-looking withal? Why, I never saw but two such in my life, and that was more than twenty years ago."

Could a blind, blundering biped be more thoroughly extinguished? If I ever doubted the innate magnanimity of womankind toward us fallen angels, — which I never did, — those doubts would have been dispelled forever. Save for a deeper shade of black in her eyes and a brighter tinge of crimson in her cheeks, she utterly ignored my stupidity, and, five minutes

later, I, too, had buried it underneath my masculine conceit, and was giving her advice as bravely as though I was the Solomon and she the fool.

“I wish to consult the architect professionally,” she mildly continued; “and, however my case may seem to you, I am sure it is not trivial or unworthy your most careful attention.”

“It would be impossible to neglect anything which interests you.”

“Don’t waste your compliments; talk to me as you would to a man. I’m thoroughly in earnest, and wish to build myself a house.”

“Do you propose to open a boarding-school?”

“A boarding-school? No!! Nor a boarding-house, nor lodgings to let, nor a milliner’s store, nor a village laundry or bakery, nor any other kind of combination house and workshop. I propose to build a house to live in, — merely that and nothing more. Is it a remarkable

thing to do? You are in the habit of making plans for dwelling-houses, I believe?"

"Certainly, certainly; but it costs something to build a house, something more to keep it afterward."

"Its cost depends, mainly, on its size, I take it, and for the rest perhaps I know as much as you."

"It is much better," I argued, "for people to live in families on the score of economy. It requires comparatively less room and less labor. The cost of furnishing is the same for one person as for more, while —"

"I beg your pardon, I've been over the ground hundreds of times, day after day and year after year, and every time find myself marching straight to the same conclusion, to wit, a small house for one; unless, indeed, I can find a mild and lovely sister, somewhere, who will share my hearth and home with me.

Now, if you will lend an ear to my complaint, I will explain my wish."

I expressed a willingness, nay, a fervent desire, both to hearken and obey.

"To begin with, I've had a present from my uncle, — some real estate ; a tract of land, unimproved but of infinite possibilities ; a corner lot, — corner of the orchard. It is four rods one way and six the other. There are two apple-trees on the south side and a demoralized row of quince-bushes at the north. I propose to build a house in the centre of the lot and go to raising quince jelly."

I did n't know whether that was a joke or not, so I looked unutterable wisdom and kept still.

"My house must have one room and of closets four : one for a little dressing-room ; one for my silk dresses, which will accumulate, as I have no one to give them to, except home

missionaries' wives, and they ought not to wear silk; one for my china; and one for my umbrella and overshoes. I should like a bay-



ACCURATE INSTRUCTIONS.

window for my bird-cage and rose-bush: my books I keep on hanging shelves. A piano I have not and don't want. I suppose there must be a cellar in the ground, and perhaps a

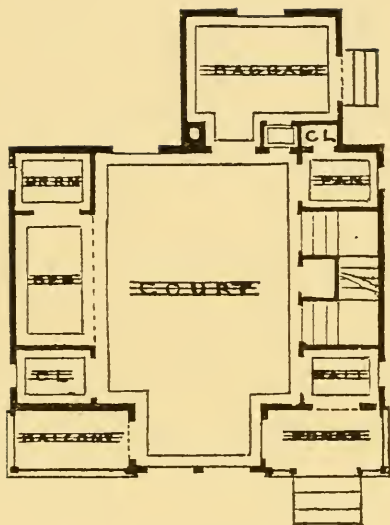
chamber under the roof; though when I am too old to go up and down stairs, neither will be of any use."

"Why do you want a chamber?"

"For company."

"You'll wish you had n't," was my reply, more forcible than elegant. "Besides, how much do you wish to spend upon your house?"

"Five hundred dollars. Then I have five hundred dollars more to invest, and shall live upon the income, adding to it by such work as I can find to do that is adapted to my taste and ability. That rare old philosopher, Teufelsdröckh, discovered that the fraction of life is increased by dividing the denominator as well as by multiplying the numerator. I propose to divide my denominator until the essential part of life, its liberty, is so large that I can live and move without restraint. Happily, I can furnish my one room with much that is



LUCIA'S PLAN.

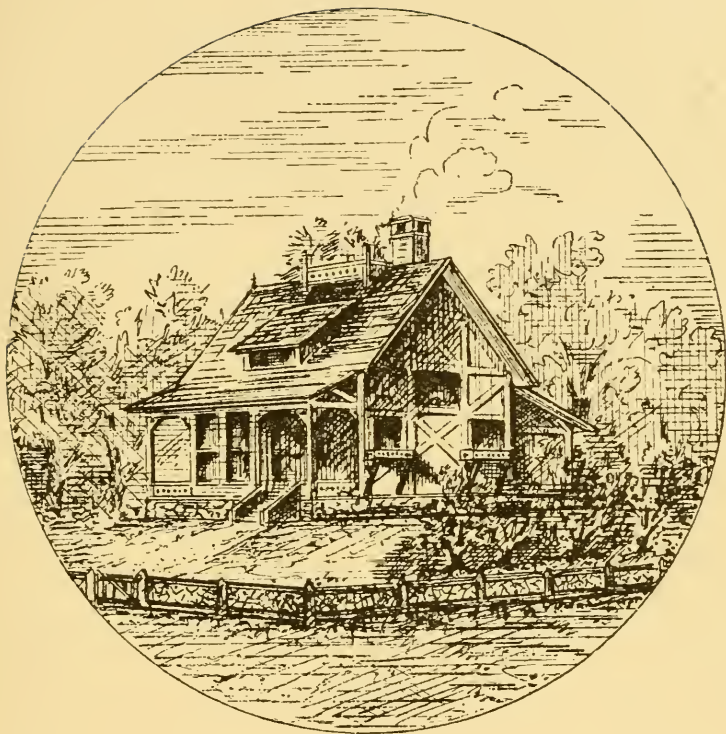
really artistic. For my daily bread I shall, if need be, imitate the philosophers of old, whose plain crust and water fed such wondrous brains. The sun shall give me light by day, the moon and stars by night. I shall read and write and study. I shall at least talk with wise people through their books; if they come to see me, may have some new truth of art or nature to impart; if nothing more, I can give them a tumbler of my quince jelly and tell them how it was made. It remains for you to make my house so comfortable and convenient that I shall waste no time or strength in keeping it in order, no fuel in keeping it warm."

"Do you understand floor plans, and do you comprehend the size of a room from given dimensions in feet and inches?"

Lucia assured me that her education in that respect had not been neglected, and graciously withdrew, after receiving from me a promise

to present at an early day the solution of her social problem as to its architectural bearings. While admiring her resolution I could n't heartily approve her resolve, and secretly hoped the mild and lovely sister would prove to be a prince in disguise. Still, I tried to see the matter through her spectacles, and prepared the accompanying plan ; which, by the way, would also serve for an aged couple of housekeepers who find the care of the home to which they have been accustomed grown too heavy for their failing strength, but who cannot give up the habits of a lifetime, and lose their identity in the homes of their sons and daughters.

The one room is twelve by sixteen feet, besides the bay four by eight, and the recess for the bed five by eight ; the latter to be enclosed by curtains. At the foot of the bed is the little dressing-room ; at the head the closet for the gorgeous apparel. The entry oc-



LUCIA'S CORNER LOT.

cupies the next corner, and the rare old china the fourth. Between the door to the company-chamber and the cellar-door is the little cupboard for out-door garments ; while at the rear, outside, is a lean-to shed, a mere shell, fair without, but within full of coal and kindling wood and broken flower-pots. The stove is one of those rare triumphs of Yankee invention, a "parlor cook" (as though people ever cooked in the parlor), which will bake and brew and wash and iron and roast and broil ; burn open like a grate ; warm like a furnace, draw like a locomotive ; and keep a fire from November to May, if wisely dumped and generously fed. The sink stands in the lean-to, but it is enclosed like a dumb-waiter and can be used from either side. It would be quite in order for another uncle to donate one of those marvellous sofa-beds that are so irresistible as couches, so dignified as seats.

The house has a simple roof reaching modestly down over the bay and two little porches in front, over the useful lean-to in the rear. As it stands low, the cellar is circular for economy's sake, twelve feet in diameter, made of brick set edgewise, and the foundation-wall extends only below the line of frost. The outer walls have double boarding, and the gable-ends above the line of the eaves are shingled like the roof.





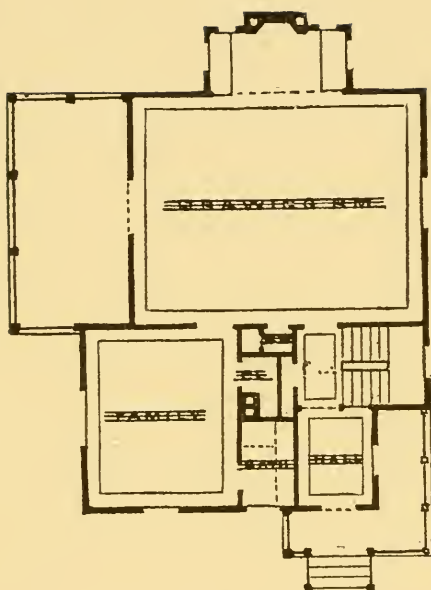
CHAPTER VII.

THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S LODGE.

HELPING an honest man to achieve his soul's desire in the way of a home is never an irksome duty to me, even when his longings in that direction are as trite as an oyster's; but my heart goes out in special sympathy toward him who brings me a new equation to reduce,—something so unlike the ordinary problems that its first statement seems absurd. They are troublesome enough. The heaven-appointed mission of original people is to worry and amaze their friends and neighbors. Without these irregular and unexpected propositions, life would be

as systematic and proper as a graded school; with them, it is progressive and sadly perplexing. Look, for instance, with an architect's eye on this plan, proposed by the Duke of Buckingham.

We chanced to meet at one of the queen's receptions, and the conversation naturally turned upon the new cottage her Majesty had presented to her daughter Betsey, on the occasion of her golden wedding. The Duke observed, by the way, that he was about to build himself a house, had arranged the principal floor exactly to his mind, and would like to employ me to complete the plans for a reasonable consideration. I replied that I had no option in the matter, the Royal Institute having fixed upon five per cent of the cost as a just and honorable recompense, whether the building cost fifty cents or half a million pounds. But as her Royal Highness was making violent efforts



BUCKINGHAM'S PUZZLE.

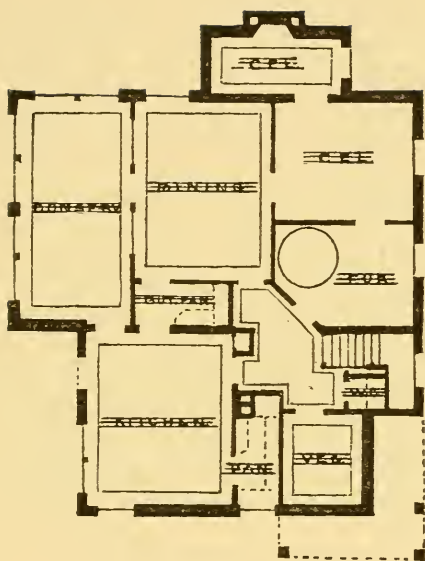
to keep awake, I suggested that he bring his plan to my office and the queen be allowed to retire.

That the case may be understood, it should be explained that the Duke is of a genial mind, given to generous hospitality and domestic cheer, the husband of one wife and the father of beautiful children. At least five charming olive-branches claim his protection, sit at his table, cluster and nestle and squabble beneath the shadow of his wing, so to speak. The Duchess has her maids-of-honor, and the Duke has literary and artistic tastes. For such a household what could one make of a plan like his? Nothing is more common than for amateur sketches to contain some manifest incongruity which compels a reconstruction on a new basis. When this is the case, the originator, being convinced of his own ignorance, commonly surrenders without parley and allows me to have

my own way. The Duke is quite too well posted to tumble into any such pitfall. In point of construction his plan was faultless, but look once more at this principal floor for a family like his! One large room twenty by twenty-five feet, with a bay-window five by twelve, and a fireplace large enough for a small closet; one bedroom fifteen feet square, a bathroom, a couple of closets, a small hall, and the stairway. When the plan was laid before me I looked as wise as possible and kept still, as certain physicians will do when they are expected to report your case as very critical but can't for their lives discover that anything is the matter.

“You think this will be sufficient for your accommodation?”

“Why not? There is a grand view toward the northwest, indeed in all directions except the east, where I have the entrance. This



BUCKINGHAM'S BASEMENT.

room will be for the usual family sitting-room, which we shall all occupy when at home. It is eleven feet high, large, well warmed and



TREASURED TROPHIES.

lighted. My book-cases will stand at each side of the large north window, which gives the best light for reading. Over the fireplace I shall hang some treasured trophies from the Adirondacks, and the bay-window with its big

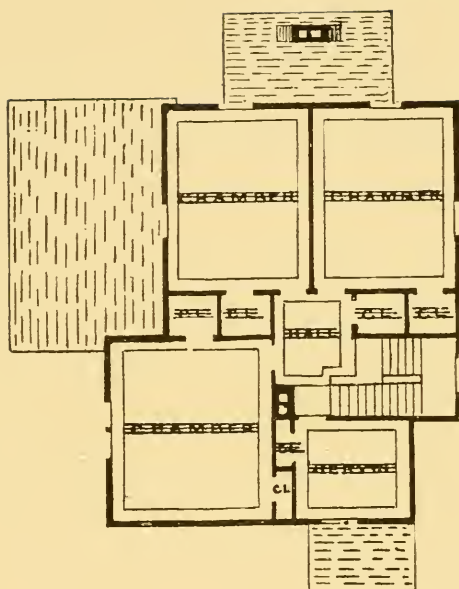
cushioned window-seats will be the laziest kind of a lounging-place. Our own room is adjacent in the southeast corner; and the broad veranda, which must be twelve or fourteen feet wide, will be better in summer than a whole suite of rooms within doors."

"The dining-room, kitchen, etc., are —"

"O, arrange those matters as you please! Everything of that sort will be in the basement, of course, and the dormitories for the family in the second story."

"Some persons object to basements."

"Undoubtedly; some persons object to shoes and stockings, but I don't propose to go bare-foot on that account. It's the only proper way to build a house, especially a cheap one, though, for that matter, I shall build my palace in that fashion. The cooking, eating, drinking, washing, ironing, churning, baking, brewing, yes, and the worrying and scolding, must all be kept



BUCKINGHAM'S DORMITORIES.

on a common level. We can go down to them easily enough ; we can't allow them to come up to us. You may be surprised to hear it, but the queen herself favors this arrangement, and has had plans for her new house in Canada made accordingly. It's to be built in Quebec, just on the nose of Cape Diamond, between the Upper and Lower Towns."

"Yet, there is a common prejudice against basements on the score of too much going up and down stairs, the difficulty of keeping the odor of cooking from the upper floors, and the gloomy character of underground rooms."

"It is a prejudice, mainly ; in the old style they were disagreeably dingy and damp. The kitchen was thrust into the pit alone, the stairs were steep and dark, there were no ample pantries and cupboards, the only direct communication between the powers above and the forces below being a sickly dumb-waiter with one

cord broken and always going by jerks. This is all wrong. The stairs must be broad and easy and light, and the dining-room, the pantries, the store-rooms, etc., should rest, with the kitchen, on the same lower floor. Otherwise, the constitution of the toughest Milesian will be incurably damaged and the temper of the most amiable housekeeper ruined forever. With these nearly related departments in a proper juxtaposition, even the dark and dangerous cellar-stairs being omitted, the case is reversed ; and if the housekeeper has the first notion of systematized labor, she will grapple with her work at a grand advantage."

"Suppose she has a baby in the cradle, shall she tote that baby down stairs while she is moulding the bread, and up again to the sitting-room while mending her dress? Perhaps the dumb-waiter might serve as a cradle, if you could only be sure the ropes would n't break."

“Ah, yes, that’s a point I had n’t considered. I don’t know whether the queen thought of it. Of course it’s difficult for one person to act in the capacity of housekeeper, nurse, cook, and chambermaid, whatever the arrangement of rooms. Still, the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot fail to see that my plan, for instance, is comfortable and compact, abundant though not large, and stylish without being pretentious or extravagant. If all these rooms, which can easily be made in the basement, were appended to the principal floor on the same level, it would be the opposite of all that.”

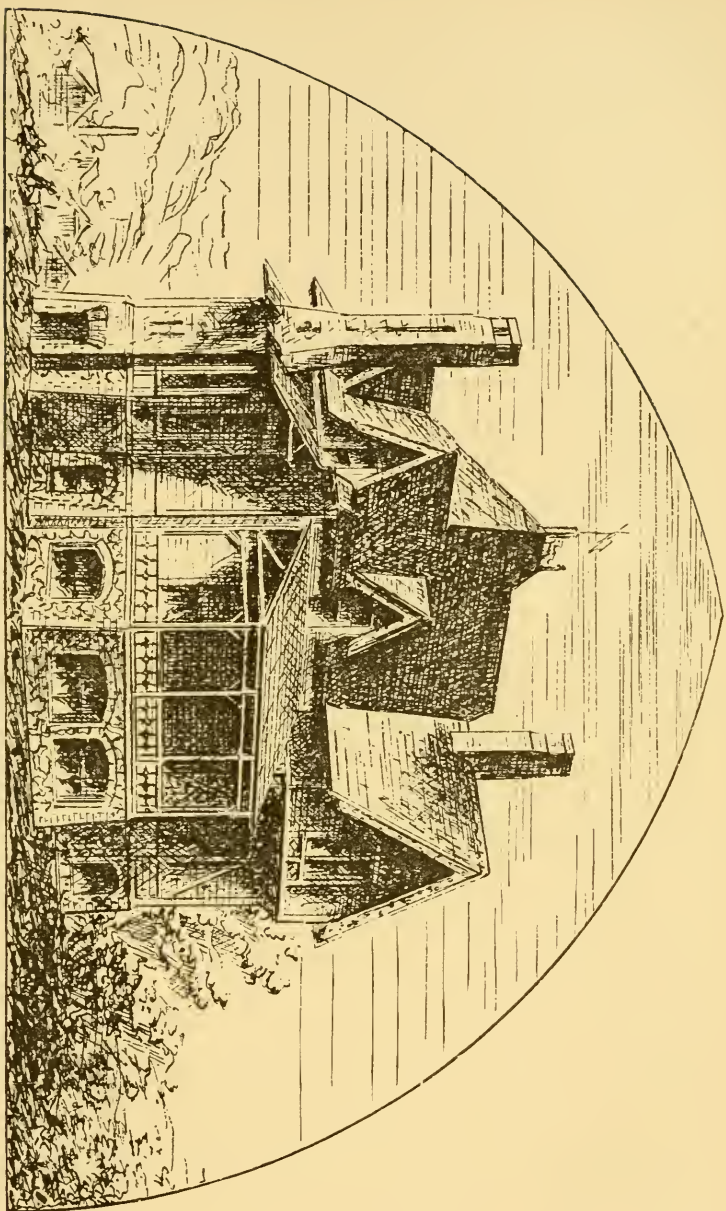
“Our sleeping-room being in the first story, her Serene Highness has only to go down to her meals; and those who occupy the second-floor dormitories seldom have occasion to descend more than one flight of stairs at once. Dark rooms are always disagreeable, whether they are underground or in the roof, and a

damp lot is not fit to live upon, wherever it is located. As to the dumb-waiter, it's a small matter, but a good text. I want one here, although the dining-room is below, because it will save many steps in case I wish to offer some simple and harmless refreshment of food or drink to my friends. Through a speaking-tube I call to my butler, who responds immediately, and all the plates, spoons, glasses, mugs, bottles, cups, — whatever may be needed, — appear at once, in the little recess by the cupboard."

"Very convenient, no doubt, but the things are so apt to get out of order and make more trouble than they save."

"Pardon me, I said the dumb-waiter was a good text. Allow me to preach the sermon.

"Every step we make in the way of culture and refinement brings a new care, a new danger. The more valuable our possessions become, the more vigilant must we be to keep them. The



THE DUKE OF ROCKINGHAM'S HOUSE.

more complete and delicate the machinery of our daily lives, the more liable is it to be thrown into disorder and the more destructive the disaster when it comes. Before you can plan well for a man, you must know whether he is savage, half-civilized, civilized, or enlightened. A bull in a china-shop is not more out of place than a boor in a truly scientific and artistic house. Carefulness in small matters and the ability to find help and comfort in appliances that must be used intelligently, if at all, mark the difference between the refined and the uncultured man."

"What if your servants are stupid and awkward?"

"My servants always understand their business!" responded the Duke with super-royal dignity; and I was truly pious for a moment. I believed, because 't was incredible.

The basement arrangement was in truth the

only possible one for the site, — a steep side-hill, not quite like Cape Diamond, but sufficient to give full-length doors and windows on the down-hill side and a charming conservatory at the south side of the dining-room, the partition between the two being mainly of glass. The details of construction, both within and without, are exceedingly simple, yet the composition is so varied that the result is strikingly picturesque and pleasing. The walls below the first floor are of rubble-stone and brick somewhat promiscuously mingled; above, of wood, the vertical faces of the gables being shingled, and the whole of second story in the pediment over front door pushes forward a couple of feet.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOME OF MR. AND MRS. BENEDICT.



ARCHITECTURE is often suggested as a suitable profession for women. I doubt if they would succeed alone as well as men. But a most efficient architectural partnership might be established by a man and his wife. Her artistic taste and perceptions of the finer points would bring forth plans and designs which his matter-of-fact judgment would reduce to the requirements of actual practice and the comprehension of the builders. I'm not acquainted with any such firm, but occasionally find among my clients a woman who has mistaken her vocation.

By way of example, let me introduce Mrs. Benedict. An admirable housekeeper, a faithful mother, a devoted wife. Instead of spend-



MRS. BENEDICT.

ing her life in the never-ending routine of thorough, systematic housekeeping, she might have helped hundreds of untaught mothers and wives to homes as goodly as her own. Now she

can only set a bright and shining example to the favored few who happen to be upon her visiting-list ; as an architect she would speak with authority. Now, her housekeeping sisters think her well-appointed home is due partly to good luck, partly to her peculiar "knack," a special gift that may be admired but cannot be imitated ; in the professional character they would see the results of careful study and culture ; they would be proud to sit at her feet and gladly pay for the counsel she could give them.

The world is gone wofully astray. We are growing wicked and vain and sick and useless, all because homes and housekeeping are on a false basis. I can see no way out of the wilderness till some saintly woman who knows the suffering and the need of humanity shall gird herself, not to distribute tracts, or sell pious books, or organize Dorcas Societies, or send the gospel to the far-away heathen, but

to place domestic architecture and domestic service and duty in the sight of all men as the essential foundation of a sound social structure.

Mrs. Benedict would be a competent leader in such a cause, for the details of household needs, the whys and the wherefores, are all at her fingers' ends. Benedict's opinion of the stone-wall, the quality of the frame, the mode of ventilating, warming, and draining, would be worth ten times as much as hers.

To organize perfectly a business in this branch of my profession, I should first engage a persuasive minister of the Gospel to instruct all persons about to build in the moralities of home-life. After a course of this fundamental teaching I would employ a medical man, wise and eloquent, who should not only prove that cleanliness is next to godliness, but he should make his pupils realize the worth of fresh air, of sunlight, of pure water and rational warmth.

No man is fit to build a house until he knows something of these things. After the physician a chemist should follow to explain the nature and causes of carbonic acid and carbonic oxide, the miasmata that rise from certain soils, and the consequence of unventilated sewerage, closing his course of family instruction by a lecture, with experiments, on the sublime art of cooking. Finally, a professor from some industrial college should describe the nature and proper use of the materials employed in building, calling especial attention to the fact that green lumber will surely shrink in drying. After such a preparation the strictly architectural service might be undertaken with a reasonable hope of a triumphant conclusion. These reflections occur most naturally in connection with the home of Mr. and Mrs. Benedict. Certain other peculiarities of the case will appear in the account of their plan.

When Benedict announced his intention of building, he referred me at once to his wife for instruction as to interior arrangement.

“That belongs to her. If she should propose to dictate the plan of my paper-mill, I should think she was crazy. She lives in the house and takes care of it, manages the servants, whips the children, and orders the cooking. The number of the rooms, their size and location, is more important to her than to me.”

“Notwithstanding all that, you may be better able to give definite instructions.”

“No, I am not. Come and talk with her.”

“Certainly,” said Mrs. Benedict, with great candor, “I can define our needs better than my husband, for I have spent far more time in studying them. It is an essential part of my duty. If he were to order the plans, I should expect him to arrange the housework also, and attend to its execution.”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Benedict. “I should have to learn how to mould pie-crust and roll out griddle-cakes.”

“And we should have to learn to eat your cooking, which would be still more difficult. What I wish to say is, that an intimate knowledge of the use of a building is essential to the proper construction of it. If you never work upon the pastry-shelf, you cannot know how large it should be or how high to place it. You seldom see the kitchen windows except from out of doors, and would follow the builder’s advice to set them on a level with those of the dining-room. I see them from within, and know they should be above the top of the sink, above the table, and out of the way of all furniture. You do not travel from the sink to the cellar twenty times a day. The distance from the pantry to the dining-room, from the sitting-room to the front door, is of no impor-

tance to you. You never climb the back stairs, so your knowledge of them is purely theoretical; and, although you may be susceptible to mosquito-bites and the annoyance of innumerable flies, the difficulty of keeping these pests out of the house is quite beyond your conception. Whether I put down the carpets at the expense of my own fingers or hire a man, the fitting around bases and registers, plinths and thresholds, must receive careful attention or there will be an unaccountable increase in the household expenses. The fixing of curtains and the hanging of pictures must not be left to chance, and the placing of the furniture will surely devolve upon me. All of these things and many more are so closely related to the plan of the house, that I should feel incompetent if unwilling to assume their direction. Do you think it unreasonable, Mr. Architect?"

"By no means. Pity 't is you are not in-

clined to exercise your talent in behalf of other homes than your own."

"That would be a different affair. What I undertake is no more than every woman ought to do for her own home. It is not going beyond the domestic sphere; indeed, I think it a more womanly duty than the unremitting study of designs for dress, to which women often devote the greater portion of their time and talents. Of architecture I know but little and am quite ignorant of construction."

"That's where my talent comes in," said Mr. Benedict. "I've been waiting to assert my rights in the new house which I've got to pay for and expect to occupy. I take it for granted that it shall be well built as to its masonry and carpentry. Not only the casings and visible wood-work shall be dry, but the frame shall be as well seasoned as twelve months' exposure to dry air will make it. Our

builders are capable enough in their crafts, all they need is careful watching. But what I am after is the Organic. Our house must be a live animal, not a mere aggregation of cells. It must see and hear and speak. It must breathe and eat, every part must influence every other part and all be parts of one consummate whole."

"I'm glad you did n't say 'stupendous,'" laughed Mrs. Benedict; "for if you build a large house, I shall surely resign my position as housekeeper."

"There's no danger. I want no more than I can pay for, and that must be so excellent in kind it will be small of necessity. Whether to have few large rooms or many small ones is for you to decide, but you must remember my purse."

"The limitations of economy are strong, but the fear of heavy burdens is stronger. I want

no extra apartments to care for, no needless space in any room. The parlor, which we shall not use constantly, must be large enough to contain a social group of friends; the library must hold our books and our own family circle. The dining-room must be *just* wide enough to allow the table to be spread and served with guests at each side, — I estimate eleven feet, — having additional length for unusual occasions. And thus with all rooms, space enough but none to spare. If the chambers are well ventilated — ”

— “As they certainly shall be — ”

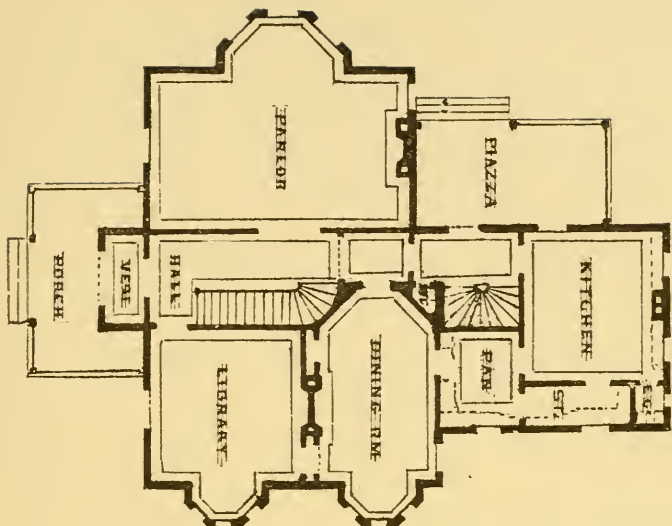
— “They need not be large, but their actual size for use depends more upon the location of the doors and windows and the possible position of the bed, than upon their area. I have a great fondness for bay-windows; should like one from the parlor, one from dining-room, and one from library; also in each of two

chambers. I do not know whether it is in good taste architecturally, but that is my fancy."

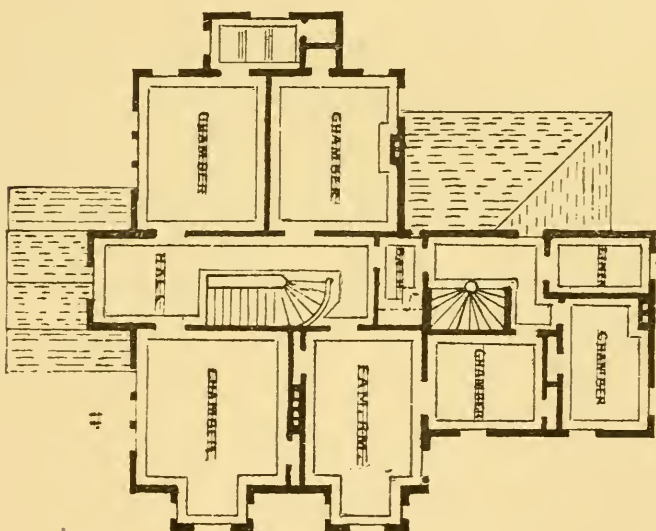
"Your husband mentioned an aggregation of cells, you would like an aggregation of bays. No, I have never found any rule limiting the number or style of windows proper for a dwelling-house; advise you to introduce them wherever and in such form as you please. It may involve some compromise in regard to cost and the exterior design, but it is your privilege to choose your own alternatives."

"I would rather omit some other things and have the bays. Back stairs, too, I must have, in the little side hall. Underneath them the descent to the cellar, where the laundry will be situated. Everything appertaining to the kitchen will then be detached from the rest of the house."

"But that does n't suit your husband's 'organic' idea."



BENEDICT'S FIRST FLOOR.



BENEDICT'S SECOND FLOOR.

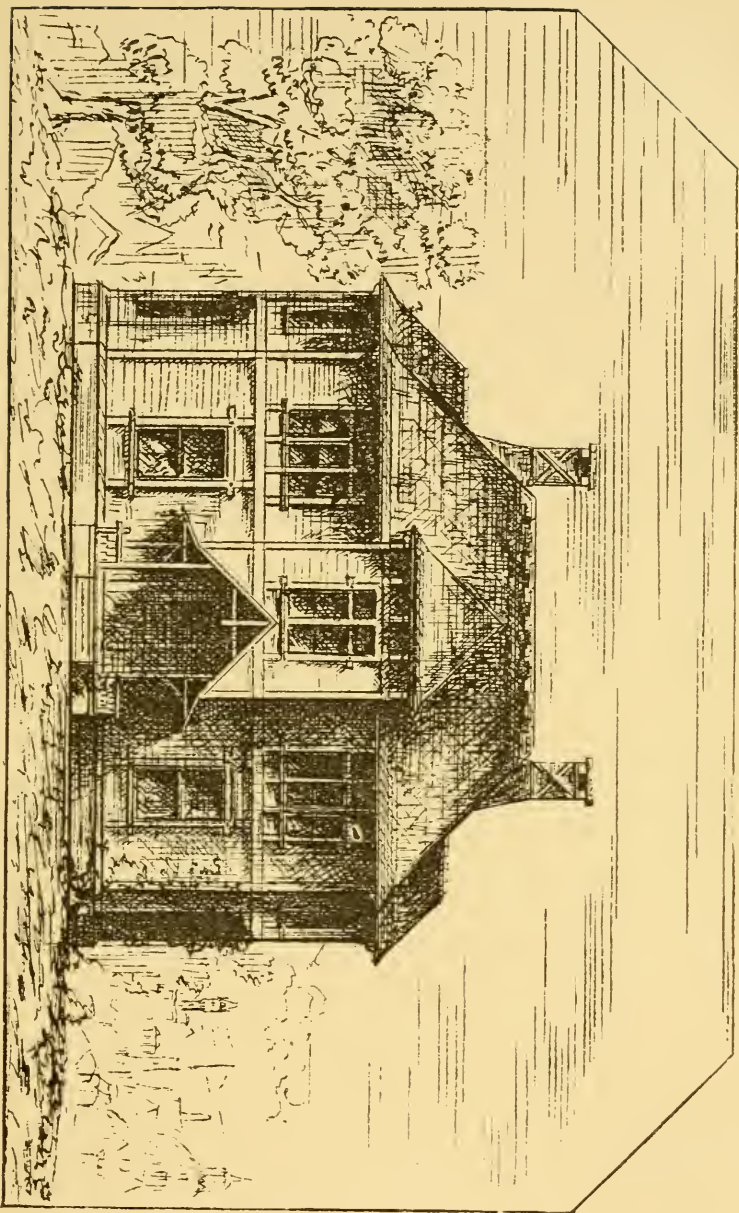
“Certainly, the legitimate functions of the kitchen must be restricted to that quarter. Bell-wires and speaking-tubes, water and air pipes, are the nerves and arteries that unite the whole outwardly, while the pervading spirit of intelligence that plans and directs completes that delightful unit which we call a home.”

“Do you want a furnace?”

“Yes, and stoves and grates and fireplaces for wood, a furnace to moderate the temperature of the house in very cold weather ; stove for cooking ; grates for health, economy, and comfort ; fireplaces for unmixed enjoyment. There must be a fireplace in the dining-room and one in our own room. Grates in the library and parlor. This, I believe, is the extent of my instructions. Mr. Benedict will describe the construction of the house and its style.”

“Not the style, the architect must attend to that. He must attend to the construction as

well, but there are certain points which I shall go for. The plumbing must all be in the centre of the house, and every pipe must be where I can lay my hand on it in five minutes. Each room in the house must have an ample, independent ventilation ; the ventilating-flue for the water-closets must be adjacent to the kitchen chimney. The spaces between outside studs must be cut off surely at each floor. The roof must have ventilating-flues between the rafters, discharging at the ridges and provided with valves. There must be two cold-air boxes from opposite directions for the furnace, and the main drain must be ventilated between the sewer and the house. This latter point is more important than all the others, or we shall have a charnel-house. You see we are set on a hill. Below us lies the city ; underneath the city, the great network of sewers ; every branch that runs up the hill becomes, when empty, a



BENEDICT'S HOUSE.

sort of chimney for all that lies below ; the most careful trapping in the world won't catch all the diphtheria and typhus that run riot in these poisonous channels and are crowding night and day to find an outlet. The merest crack or flaw in a pipe, and the evil spirit enters and takes possession of our house. This ventilating-pipe between the sewer and the house is a sort of safety-valve ; not infallible, or the only thing to be done, but better than nothing. It mitigates an ill that, in the present state of civilization, cannot be wholly removed ; but we are not more than half civilized, at best. Now, in making up the plan, keep all these things in mind. I know they will cost something. I know we could have a larger house for less money ; but whatever else we must forego, let us, in our homes, have safety and let us have peace."

Fronting toward the west, the vestibule at the entrance was quite essential. Broad views

over the Connecticut valley justified the bay-windows upon the south side ; the dining-room being often occupied as a sitting-room, — a sensible habit for quiet, home-loving people. A room never used except at meals has a kind of formality not altogether homelike and cosey.

The size of the parlor is sensibly increased by the large bay, and the plumbing is central as could be imagined ; too much so in the second story, were it not for the outlet afforded by the back stairs.





CHAPTER IX.

THE PLANTER'S HOME.

IF the entire human race had been, after all, restricted to the Garden of Eden, it would no doubt have been necessary by this time to build houses several stories in height to accommodate a somewhat crowded population. The destruction of a single fruit-tree or the covering up of a squash-vine would have been a serious matter. Since we have been given the whole surface of the earth to flatten ourselves upon, it's impossible to account for the propensity for climbing stairs. It may have been inherited from our remote ancestors, who found the topmost branch

of a forest tree a safe and comfortable lodging-place ; but since the fall, there's no excuse for us. The time and strength wasted in over-



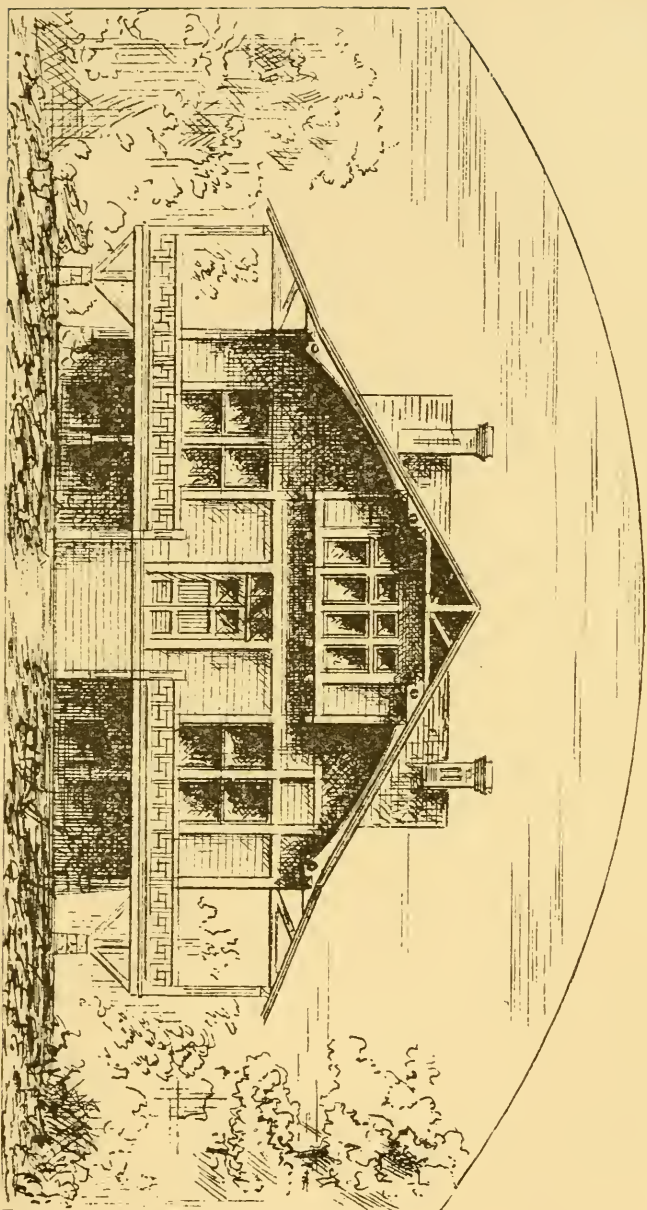
ELEVATED LODGINGS.

coming the ups and downs in our habitations would perform a large share of the agricultural labor necessary to feed the world. My favorite hobby in the way of labor-saving invention

is a sort of double-acting basket-elevator, by which the last man down shall wind the machine that is to draw the next one up. This invention will work a complete revolution in house-building, enabling us to construct abodes twenty-seven stories high. Until it is perfected and patented, I shall continue to recommend breadth rather than height, I shall still vituperate the man who invented stairs and first taught the carpenters to lay a second floor. I know it's not pleasant to sleep on the ground ; it is desirable to have the front door above the top of the average snow-drift, and to feel that your windows are too high for the intrusive gaze of rude outsiders ; but for this purpose six feet are as good as twenty. I cannot positively assert that it will cost no more to build a house containing many rooms all lying side by side than it would if they were piled up in two or more tiers ; but I think the man who thus

spreads himself and his family will be richer at the end of ten years than if he had attempted the compact style,—richer in goods and richer in friends, for an ample hospitality emanates unceasingly from the wide, low, genial roofs that are never built by men of narrow souls.

The planter wished a study for a simple home. “Something broad and free and homely,” he wrote. “We have room enough, foundation-stones are cheap, and shingles abundant. Don’t ask me to spend my strength in climbing stairs, and then to swelter underneath a heated roof. Scatter the rooms around, give ample halls and generous doors and windows. We Southern people are not fond of being ‘cribbed, cabined, and confined.’ I will not imply a doubt of your good sense by suggesting that the modes of building that are fit and natural at the North are, for obvious reasons, quite unsuited to this warmer clime, but shall



THE PLANTER'S HOUSE.

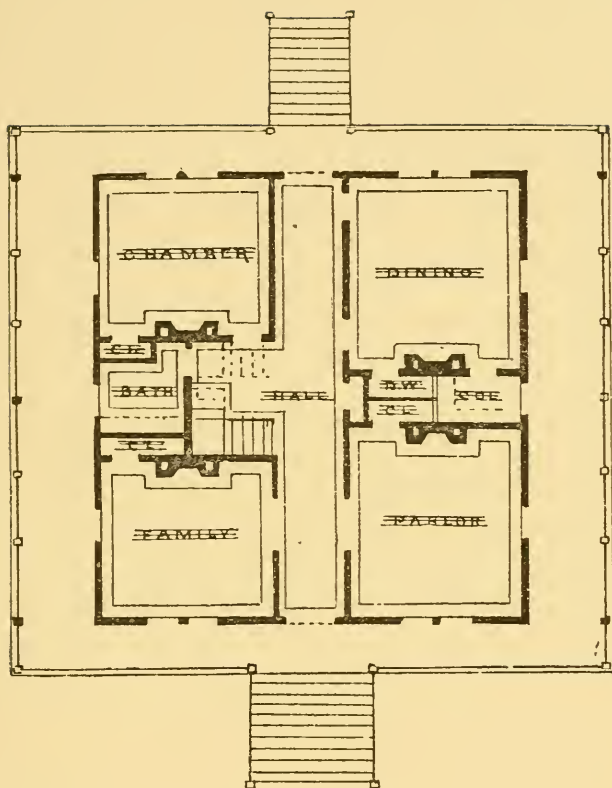
take the liberty of saying that I do not fancy the peculiar ostentatious spirit that asserts itself in the high and mighty style. I think we can justly claim a native frankness and habit of straightforward truthfulness. I hope you will forget the cautious, dignified reserve that seems to thrive in your cooler climate, and make the plan for my house with an entire recklessness in regard to outward appearance. Having placed the rooms as they will be most convenient, don't hamper yourself with any fear of consequences to the outside. The kitchen need not enter into your study, for it will of necessity be detached from the main building, unless we learn to take our viands *à la raw*.

“My objection to stairs does not apply to steps. The first floor should be elevated five or six feet from the ground, but it must contain all the essential rooms. Make the roof as

simple as possible, and give us piazzas *ad infinitum*. There will, of course, be some space under the roof; and if you can contrive a couple of chambers that will not be intolerably hot, they will be serviceable when we have a deluge of company. Asking an occasional guest to ascend to an upper room is a different matter from making that a part of your own daily exercise.

“Enclosed you will find a list of local prices for materials and labor, which will enable you to conform to my appropriation.”

One of the chief architectural stumbling-blocks is the difficulty of deciding how far practical utility and economy shall be sacrificed to artistic use. In designing a house, whether it is attempted by an amateur, an architect, or an ignoramus, considerations of this sort are almost sure to arise. Shall the main posts be made higher for the sake of improved outward ap-



THE PLANTER'S FIRST FLOOR.

pearance? will a steeper roof look better? shall this wing be projected another foot and that one made a couple of feet wider? Not questions of actual use at all, merely studies to secure a more pleasing outline. Conscientious artists, who would not be tempted to use a single superfluous feature in a decorative way, will not hesitate to change the necessary dimensions of a building to an unlimited extent in order to produce certain ratios of height and breadth supposed to be correct and infallibly pleasing. There is a huge French-roofed house in Madagascar in which an intermediate story, three or four feet in height, is introduced — of course without floor, finish, or light — between the second and third stories, for the sake of improving the outside “proportions.”

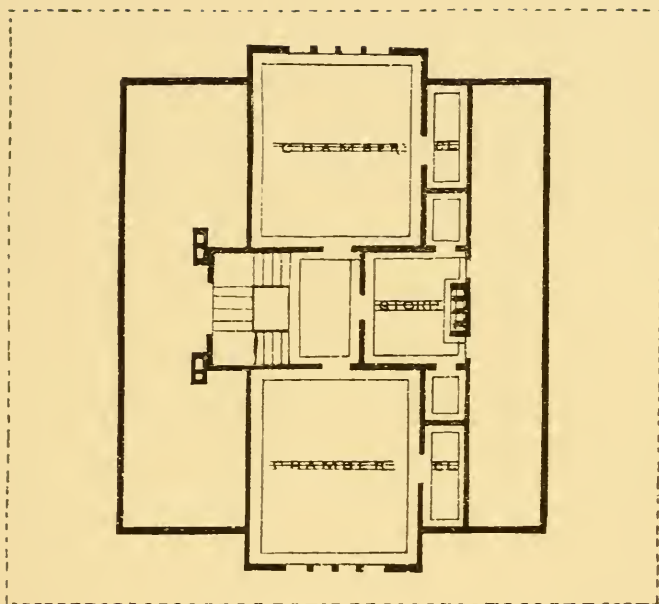
The planter saved me from all anxiety on this point by his frank defiance of outward show. “Make it as homelike and comfortable as

possible, and never mind the looks," was the substance of his instruction.

With general directions of that quality the same honest simplicity should characterize the details. The rough stones that cumbered the ground were to be set in order to the height of six feet, and would make a safe, picturesque pedestal for the broad frame; the main roof, stretching its rafters out on every side, covered the wide piazzas and balconies, even as a hen covereth her chickens.

Through the building, from east to west, ran the hall, and the "modern conveniences" were centrally grouped in a somewhat exclusive fashion. The use of the different apartments is a matter of individual choice. It always seems quite superfluous to label the rooms as shown on a plan, as though the inmates were incapable of arranging their own household.

I do not know why the Southern fashion of



THE PLANTER'S CHAMBERS.

an outside kitchen might not sometimes be adopted even in New England with most comfortable results. Our summers are surely hot enough to justify the banishment of needless fires. True, we should suffer a partial moving twice a year, but we should be spared the various expedients in building by which we try to suit two opposite climates. I wonder if the forced habitual trimming of our sails to meet the changing weather is responsible for the moral compromises that sometimes lead us into trouble. On the other hand, the stone basement of the planter's cottage might contain a kitchen so carefully enclosed and ventilated and cut off from the remainder of the house that the mistress of the mansion might, even in the room directly over it, keep cool and sweet as a magnolia-blossom.

As for the chambers, a double roof on the ice-house principle protects them from the burning

heats of day, by blasts of evening air drawn upward through the spaces between the rafters by solar heat. The same provisions reversed that keep a house warm in cold weather will also keep it cool in warm weather. Even double windows would be cooler than single ones ; but where light is to be excluded as well as heat, adjustable shutters are more convenient than double glass.





CHAPTER X.

THE PARSONAGE.

IT was not to be under the control of a committee consisting of two deacons, the parish clerk, and three other laymen, with their respective wives, each one of whom knew just what a parsonage ought to be. It was not for my own pastor. Indeed, it was a parsonage only in being built and owned by a clergyman, who was his own building committee, with the privilege of paying his own bills and having no advisers but a sensible wife. He lived in a neighboring State, and the long journey which I must take in the midst of March was not a pleasure-trip.

"You will not find," the good man had written, "New England country or New England towns, but kind and hospitable friends. I'm utterly at sea in the attempt to reduce my notions to the apprehensions of the builders. I cannot even convey to you by writing a clear impression of my wishes. Besides, I want you to see the lot and its surroundings, and, furthermore, to talk the matter over in family conclave. I'm painfully sensible of the magnitude of the task and of my own unfitness. Pray come and help me, even if you tarry but a night."

I could not resist the appeal, so I bade an affectionate adieu to my weeping family, and bought a ticket for the Middle States. O, these wonderful railroads, that laugh at time and double up space! I never travel on them day or night without chanting an unceasing song of gratitude to the heads and hands that make such speed and safety possible.

It's a constant wonder that I'm not hurled into eternity at every tie. I look upon conductors, engineers, and brakemen with the same admiring awe that filled the subjects of the old magicians, and curl down on the rough plush



"BLESS ME, THIS IS PLEASANT!"

cushions with a blissful sense of security, knowing that the brave and handsome conductor will watch over me and the switch-tender save me from going astray. How can we help loving those to whom we trust our lives in such child-

like helplessness? My faith was rewarded. I reached the family conclave in safety, and we were soon discussing architecture in general and parsonages in particular.

“I have not peeped over the Rocky Mountains, and know not what architectural glories may be shining in Alaska, but as far as I have looked, I notice that a certain grace and refinement of outward appearance diminishes as the distance increases from — shall I say where?”

“By all means, by all means.”

“As the distance increases from — Boston.”

“Ah! you Massachusetts people turn to the Hub as true Mahometans turn to Mecca.”

“Not quite so devoutly as that; and I do not, of course, refer to cities, but to the towns and rural districts through which we pass in a journey across the continent. There’s a gradual falling away in artistic expression, as we pass from east to west.”

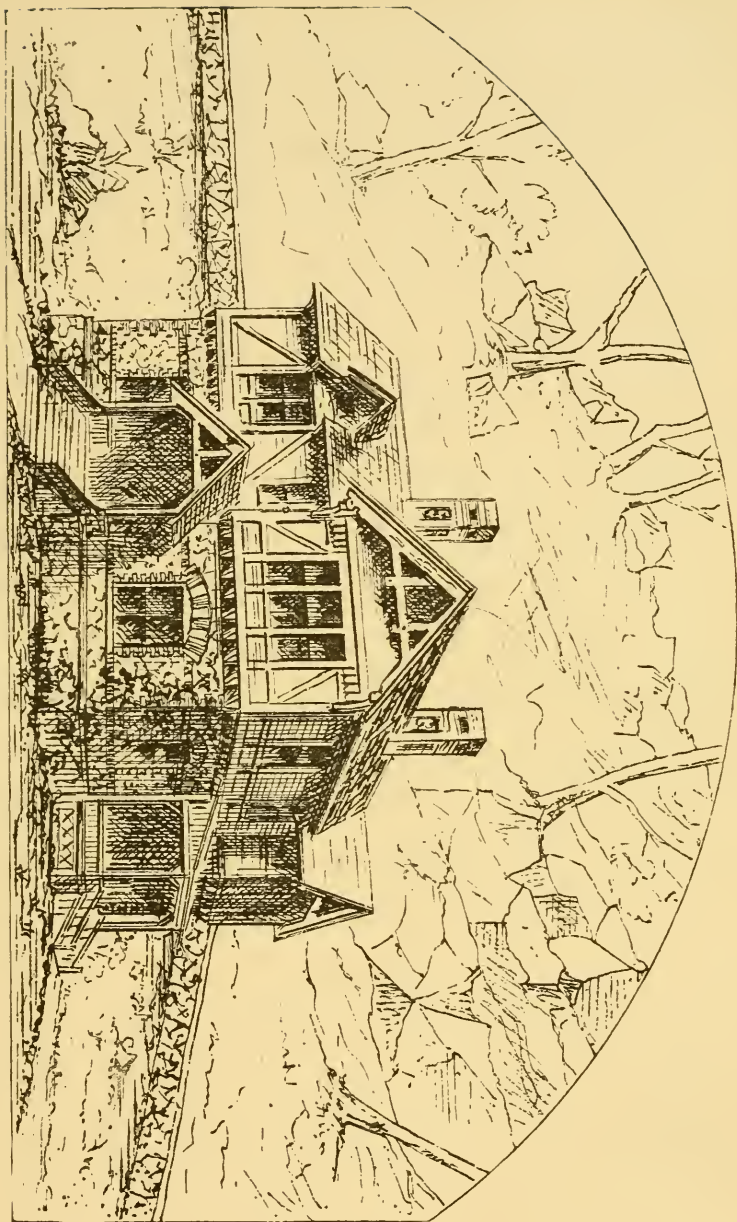
“Very naturally. These Western homes are the offspring of necessity. There has been no time to surround them with the graces and amenities that belong to the older sections.”

“That is not the only cause of the difference. These defects spring from want of thought and care oftener than from want of time or means. We have only to indicate our wishes in the roughest terms, and Nature leaps to do our bidding. Our New England ancestors were too stern for any vanity of outward show, but the same conscientious spirit that wasted nothing in idle parade also prevented the waste of such enjoyment as came from pride in cleanliness and perfect order. I think, too, the romantic element has always been stronger near the coast, and left more frequent traces of its influence. Notwithstanding the wonderfully picturesque location of this city, it has a queer, prosaic look which I never saw in New England,

even in towns that have been rapidly built within a generation. There 's little enough of freshness and originality in the old Bay State, but we see more frequent signs of independent thought and worthy aim."

" You will look upon us, then, as missionary ground. Better architecture and more variety in our homes will surely be agreeable, yet you must not ask us to accept inferior houses for the sake of being odd, or to pay a larger price for what is no better. These buildings that you call prosaic are doubtless in the style that 's best adapted to supply the needful comforts of living with the smallest outlay. Whatever is added to them must be in the way of outward ornamentation, I suppose."

" By no means. We must quench our aspirations after beauty, or try to realize them in the substance of the house. Let us build it in imagination, even before the plan is drawn,



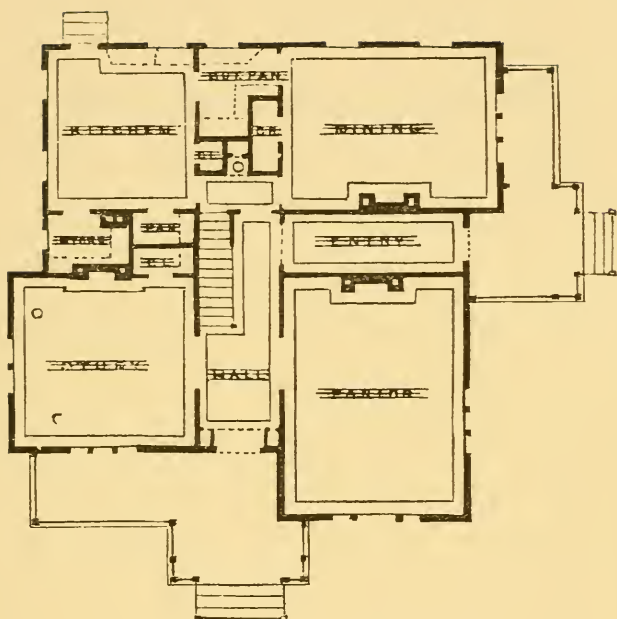
THE PARSONAGE.

beginning with the wall for the foundation and underpinning. This shall be composed of the granite blocks that cover the proposed site and fill the ground. At least one third of it will be in sight, but what of that ! The rocky bluffs that overhang the river, and on which your house is to rest, are beautiful to look upon when the sunlight gleams across their wrinkled faces, when the snow softens their outlines, or the changing clouds transform them into hanging-gardens and flower-covered terraces. Will the walls of your house be any less beautiful if constructed of the same material shaped into forms of use ? ”

“ But is this practicable without a great expense ? ”

“ Entirely so, unless you try to improve the lines and tints that nature gives. Would these everlasting hills be more lovely if the massy rocks that buttress them around were shaped

by line and plummet? Would you like the oak-leaves better if every one were just three inches square? No; take them as you find them, only selecting such as are of similar texture, and do not try to bring them to smooth surfaces and horizontal lines except where use requires it. When all the larger stones are worked into the wall and it is brought two feet or more from the ground, put a girdle of the larger, straighter blocks around the top, and on these lay a single course of bricks. Here we will start again with smaller stones laid solidly and smoothly in a mortar half cement and half of common lime with sand. It will be hard work to form the corners and the window-jambs of these rough stones, so we'll trim the walls with hard-burned bricks. Your criticising neighbors will say the brick are introduced for ornament. We know they are for use; and if they likewise serve for decoration, all the better.



FIRST FLOOR OF THE PARSONAGE.

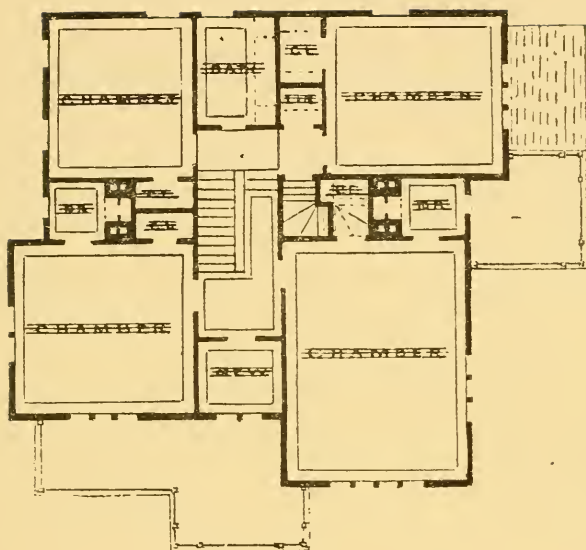
“But this wall must be very thick.”

“Sixteen inches will be sufficient, for we shall not carry it more than ten feet above the band of brick. The second story will be of wood resting as securely as possible on its solid basis. This upper wooden part shall be as simple as the stone-wall. Plain heavy casings and a quiet protecting roof, with no extraneous additions except perhaps some simple form of wood or metal to emphasize the expression of the essential features, a sort of link, or terminal, for construction lines. Dark slate will cover the roof, and the chimneys must assert themselves with robust dignity. They need not be painted, but the shaft above the roof can be partly built of the same stones as are used in the wall of the house, and black brick will forestall the smoke-stains near the top.”

The plan, after considerable study, resolved

itself into a broken square, compact, although cut quite in two by the hall, the natural approach to the lot requiring the side entrance. The wardrobe closets near the front door are only sixteen inches deep, but that's enough. They are not expected to hold Saratoga trunks and feather-beds. The little lobby under the staircase cuts off the kitchen, contains a wash-bowl, and commands an approach to the dining-room and to the cellar. As the dining-room and kitchen are fifteen inches lower than the front rooms, the chambers above them are entered directly from the landing near the top of the stairs. The attic stairway, starting from the same level, leads to some dormitories that are quite sufficient for people who have learned to accommodate themselves to the pitch of a roof and other vicissitudes of life.





SECOND FLOOR OF THE PARSONAGE.



CHAPTER XI.

ONE OF KING KOLE'S COTTAGES.

HIS Majesty owns real estate in Berkshire, beautiful Berkshire, where Nature should inspire every man to be an orator, poet, artist. The overhanging rocks stand like towers against the sky. The woods that climb the mountain-sides appear like spires of distant cities, or storming troops with waving plumes and banners bright beneath a mighty fortress. Here, if anywhere, should every work of man be noble, grand, artistic. The sweeping curves of the iron track, the wild echoing shriek of the locomotive's scalding breath, the thundering roar and the gleaming

light of midnight trains, are all in brave accord with Nature's dignity. On the swelling curves of the hilly pastures quaint stone-fences tell of stern, unwearying patience, and the shining



“BEAUTIFUL BERKSHIRE”

villages that cluster in the vales suggest an earthly paradise of loveliness and peace. Alas! all the foul wizards that upset Don Quixote's valiant schemes never caused half so many disappointments as follow the enchantment that

distance lends to a New England village. A row of twenty-nine white houses, exactly alike, just two rods apart and one rod from the street, makes a pleasant gleam in the landscape when seen from a point ten miles away, over hill and valley, and against a rich background of blue mountains melting into bluer sky. Seen from a back alley within a range of ten rods, the artistic effect is different.

King Kole is a landholder, and a practical philanthropist. It is n't necessary that he should be hopelessly sentimental in order to object to these bare, heartless-looking buildings in which hard-working mechanics are vainly trying to cultivate a love of home. If anything would develop the most deplorable elements of communism, it would be the forced occupation of a house devoid of every real charm, and so entirely identical with every other human habitation in sight that it can only be distinguished

by its number. One step further, and the occupants will number themselves correspondingly, and be relieved of all interest and responsibility, except to have a care that none of the figures get misplaced, — a blunder that might lead to serious complications. I knew the good intentions of the King, and was filled with renewed admiration when he revealed his plans and wishes as follows : —

“ There are many grand and mighty things which kings and other men have done to benefit mankind. Some have wrought with gold, some with men and arms, and others by that subtle power we call the will. My fulcrum is my real estate, my lever the plans you must give me. On the building-lots of which I hold the deeds, homes for the multitude shall rise, better and cheaper than any ever built before. Upon these toilers we rely for daily bread. Through them alone is future elevation possible.

They are the foundation of society. Raise the foundation, and the superstructure rises safe and sound. Attempt to lift it by the roof, and it crashes into ruin. The marble palace of the merchant prince is less a blessing to humanity than a simple cottage that shows by its own economy and loveliness how sweet a home is possible for every honest man. How glorious, if every worker among these Berkshire hills could own and occupy a cheerful, cosey, tasteful home! Our light would shine from Panama to Labrador. Ours would become the promised land, drawing the wandering feet and the longing eyes. Every man's interest and effort would be for justice and for truth."

I said King Kole is a practical man. He is thoroughly so ; but the greatest practical men — those who achieve the most actual work, that shines and grows and covers the earth — are filled to overflowing with a ruling ideality. Out

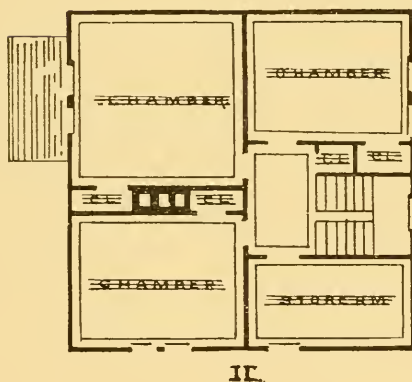
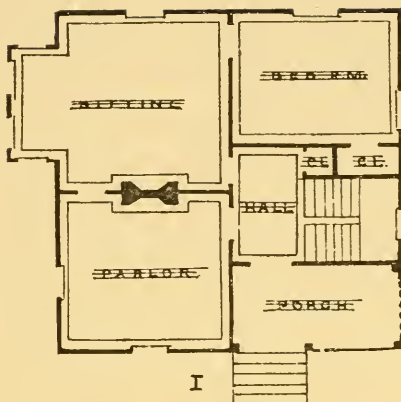
of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ; out of the fulness of the brain the hand worketh.

His Majesty had not yet arrived at the point where I could introduce my pencil.

“ Comfort, good taste, economy, — these three, we must have them all in the homes for the million, and you must tell me how to secure them. The time has come for action. The people are thinking. The more they think, the more they long for something better. The will is preparing the way. The unconquerable love of liberty rebels against the limitations of tenement-blocks ; the instinctive love of truth disdains the worthless show that seeks to hide discomfort underneath a bold outside.”

Just here the King lay back on his throne, took off his crown, leaned on his elbow, and asked me what I thought of it.

“ I think convenient, well-built, attractive

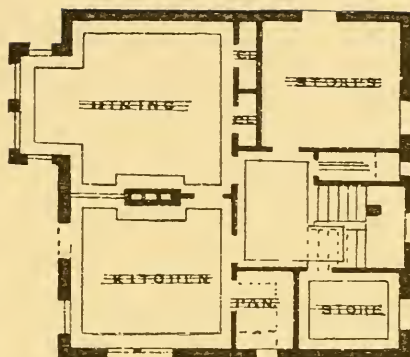


KING KOLE'S FLOOR PLANS.

houses need not cost any more than those that are inconvenient, awkward, and shabby. Other things being equal, of course small ones cost less than large ; for the majority of house-keepers they are vastly better. A sufficient number of sleeping-apartments is desirable, though if care is taken to secure pure air they need not be large. It is not necessary to have one room to wash in, another to cook in, a third for eating, a fourth to sew in, a fifth, sixth, and seventh to read, to sit, and to freeze callers in, besides a large hall in the most valuable part of the building, a front staircase to keep clean and to look at, and back stairs for breaking our necks. Sometimes it is well to have all these ; oftener they are a burden, adding nothing to comfort, nothing worth having in the way of what so many vainly long for,—a refined mode of living. The gentility that does not shine in the work-room and through

the working-clothes is of the most spurious kind."

"That's true, that's true," said the King, "but nothing less than a moral battering-ram will beat the notion into the heads of the people, or cure the comparatively poor of the weak and wicked endeavor to dress and to live, to all appearance, like the possessors of large incomes. This is what drives them into houses belonging to some one else, and which can never be homes. When our boys and girls who know nothing better than these become noble men and women, we shall gather Catawba grapes of buckthorn, and send to Canada for our figs. The more thoughtful are coming to their senses. The experience of the last two years has taught them that a small house rent-free is the best place for comforts when comforts are in order, and for close economy when economy is necessary."



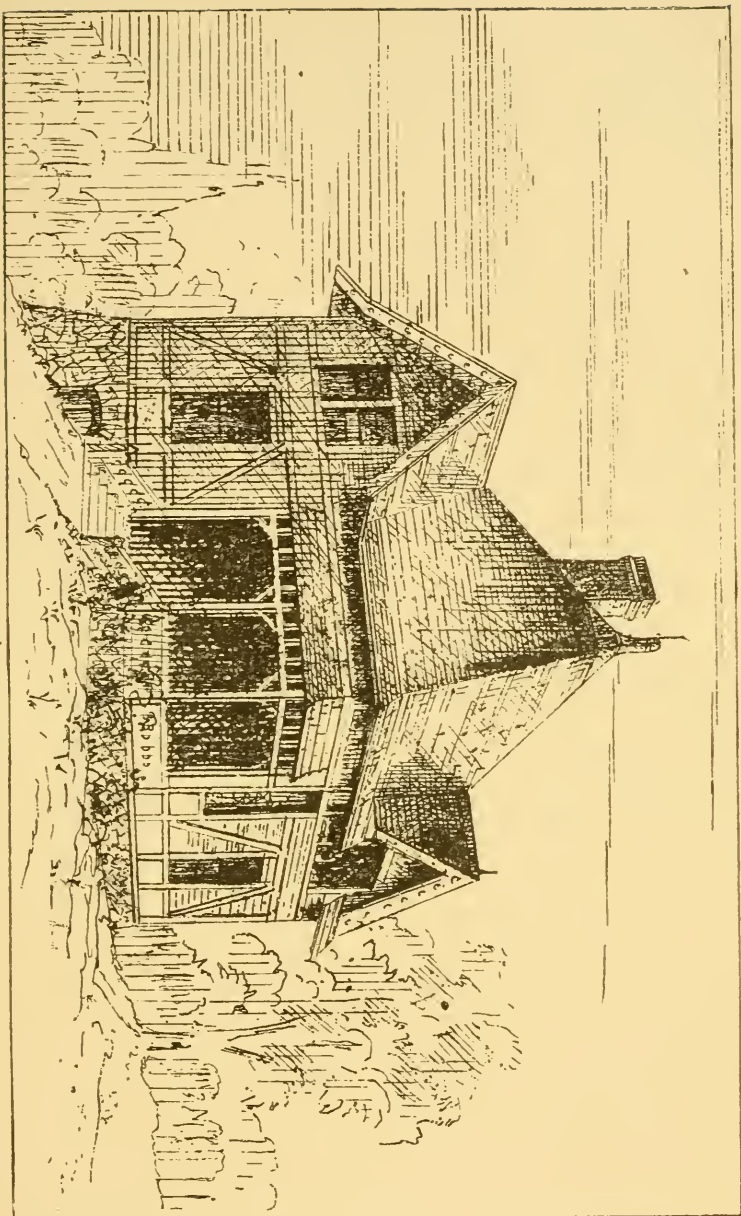
III

KING KOLE'S BASEMENT.

I assured him of my zealous aid, and expressed my opinion that he would not begin to satisfy all who would be eager to embrace the opportunity afforded them to work out their temporal salvation by buying one of his houses at a cost of from eighteen to twenty-five hundred dollars besides the land. Then we went out to view the ground. It was an uneven tract in one of those enchanted villages. It might, by much scraping and filling, be reduced to a dead level, but the beauty of its natural outline would be destroyed; and what if one house did stand a little higher than its neighbors? "Pygmies are pygmies still, though perched on Alps." Neither is it indispensable that each separate house should stand on a level plateau. There is great economy, and great convenience too, sometimes, in following the direction of the natural slope,—not defying it. A house having a propped-up look, as though it was born

on a Western prairie but had been blown against the rocky hillsides of New England, is as helpless and forlorn as a stranded ship waiting to fall into pieces. It refuses to yield gracefully to a power immeasurably greater than itself. A pitiful sight in houses or in men!

We began on one of the side-hill lots, arranging the plan with certain rooms in the basement, not the sleeping-rooms or those requiring the largest amount of light and air. In nearly all cases a division of household affairs exists which easily admits a separation in point of room. The cooking and eating, washing and ironing, can be apart from other housework. Leaving economy of land and building out of the question, perhaps it would never be wise to place one room above another. Upon this particular lot a simple rectangular building, with a basement story, was plainly the best thing.



ONE OF KING ROLES' COTTAGES.



CHAPTER XII.

THE POET'S ABIDING-PLACE.

HE came rushing toward me, one day,
in a fine frenzy. Being, at that time,
unaware of his poetical tendencies, I
could n't account for the rolling of his eyes.

"I've bought a farm!" he exclaimed, jumping about ten feet into the air.

"What upon earth are you going to do with a farm?"

"'Suitably divided into tillage, pasture, and woodland,' the advertisement said,—a senseless account, giving no conception of its real worth. Tillage supplies food for man, pasture for the kine, and the woodland feeds the fire. Meat

that perisheth, all. Not for this have I bought my farm. There are grand old oaks, heroic forms, scarred and riven, but defiant still. Sombre pine-trees chant their mournful monodies to the evening winds, — a nobler music than cathedral choirs; and sunlit glades are green and soft with fragrant ferns and humble violets, — pictures the masters never equalled. In the darksome dell a wimpling brooklet steals away among the mossy stones — ”

“ O, bother your wimples ! Is there a newly discovered oil-well in the vicinity, or a prospective railroad that will ‘develop’ the real estate ? By the way, I can give you a suggestion on that point. Have a map made of the premises, — sheep-pasture, swamp, sand-bank, ledge, whatever it happens to be, — draw some parallel lines across it for streets, reduce rods to inches, sell by the foot what you bought by the acre, and the property is ‘developed.’ Perhaps it

covers an iron-mine from which you can raise a crop of door-latches and tenpenny nails. Where is it, anyhow ? ”

“ It is far away from the madding crowd ; for the wearying show and greed of gain, there ’s the restful beauty of tree and cloud, the music of birds, and the pattering rain. The uncounted gifts of Nature are ours, her bounteous feast is ever prepared, the bee and the butterfly challenge the flowers, and the wild fox digs his hole unscared ! ”

The truth was, I had only known him as patiently devoted to the noble cause of commerce, — a buyer and seller of goods, to whom a tree was worth about eighteen dollars per thousand, board measure, a brook the number of horse-power represented by its fall, and a fox — his skin. When he dropped into poetry, I was simply amazed. My hair — what there is of it — stood on end, and my voice clung to my

jaws. He heeded me as Euroclydon heeds the staring owl. Striking a lofty attitude, he continued to warble.

“Hence, ye vain cares and trifles, fly! The world’s temptations, and its fears, no more shall cloud my azure sky and tinge with grief the rolling years. The turf shall be my fragrant shrine, the voices, the forms, the hearts I adore, shall always be near me and always be mine, to have and to hold and to love evermore. Broader and richer my purpose shall be, the goal shall be higher and nobler the fight, till the life-stream is lost in the infinite sea, and the darkness of time in eternity’s light!”

He ceased, and I stood mute, waiting for him to alight, which he did immediately, landing right side up, sure-footed as a cat. We sat down by the wayside, on a mossy stone, and thus spake the poet:—

“I am going to build a house on my new

farm. A house should be square,—exactly square. That is to say, it ought to be round, but it must have right angles, hence it can only be square. A given extent of walls will contain more space in that than in any other



“BY THE WAYSIDE, ON A MOSSY STONE.”

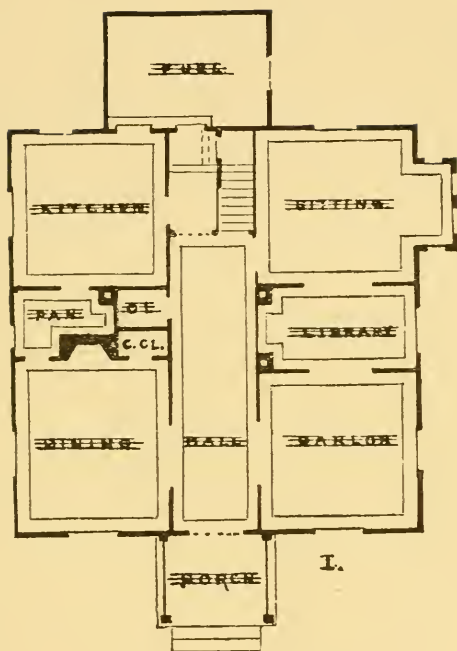
rectangular form. The rooms should also be square, for similar reasons. Of these, if equal in size, there will be, of course, on each floor, one, four, or nine, and so on.”

I observed, from this, that the poet was likewise a mathematician. .

“One is not enough, nine are too many. Therefore the square house of four equal square rooms is the most suitable and economical for human habitations. This cannot well be less than thirty feet on each side. I have fixed upon thirty-six feet, which will be sufficient for my needs.”

At this point it appeared that the poet was a man of sense as well as a mathematician. He considered his own needs, not the requirements of fashion.

“My plan may not be the best possible. I submit it for wholesome correction and reproof to you, who can show me, in the plan, defects I should not detect till they were fixed in the building. I have not studied law, or medicine, or architecture, neither have I learned to make watches or sewing-machines. Life is too short



THE POET'S FIRST FLOOR.

for a man to be skilled in many things. When I need that which lies outside of my own special training, I rely upon some one who has studied and practised what I have not. I would not ask your advice unless assured that I may safely follow it."

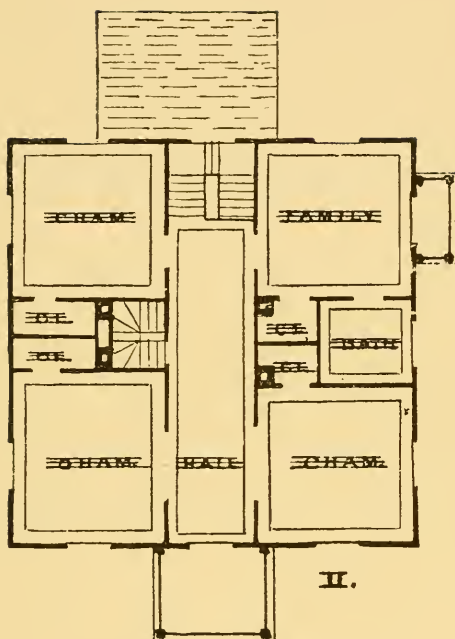
A gentleman, as well as a man of sense and a mathematician.

"Thoroughly satisfying homes for the common people," pursued the poet, "are the one thing needful in American society. I use the phrase 'common people' in no derogatory sense, meaning those who are not too rich to be thoughtful of others, or too poor to be helpful, — the large class who either hire houses which they cannot afford to own, being thus placed in constant temptation to live beyond their means, or who own such as they are not content to accept as permanent abodes. In this matter much depends upon architects; yet you

always work under orders, and must aim to satisfy the personal needs and tastes of your clients rather than to carry out any reformatory notions of your own. So I hold it the duty of every man who builds a house to try to make it an irreproachable model of an honest man's home. We all have our social and moral hobbies. My plan of reconstructing society rests upon square houses. Mr. Fowler tried octagons, but they were not popular, — too many triangles. An equilateral rectangle is the only available form. Exact dimensions of the rooms are not important. I have fixed upon thirteen feet square as the minimum, and would provide for extra occasions by wide doors between adjacent rooms."

"But I don't like sliding-doors."

"I know it. Perhaps they are unworthy a large, complete dwelling, but for adapting a small house to a variety of uses they are not



II.

THE POET'S SECOND FLOOR.

only convenient, but they are economical and — democratic. Through them the parlor, a room dear to the instincts of American house-keepers, is not only brought within reach of the humbler parts of the house, but is placed on a level with them when occasion requires, and that not by degrading the higher, but by elevating the lower, as always happens when truth and error grapple.”

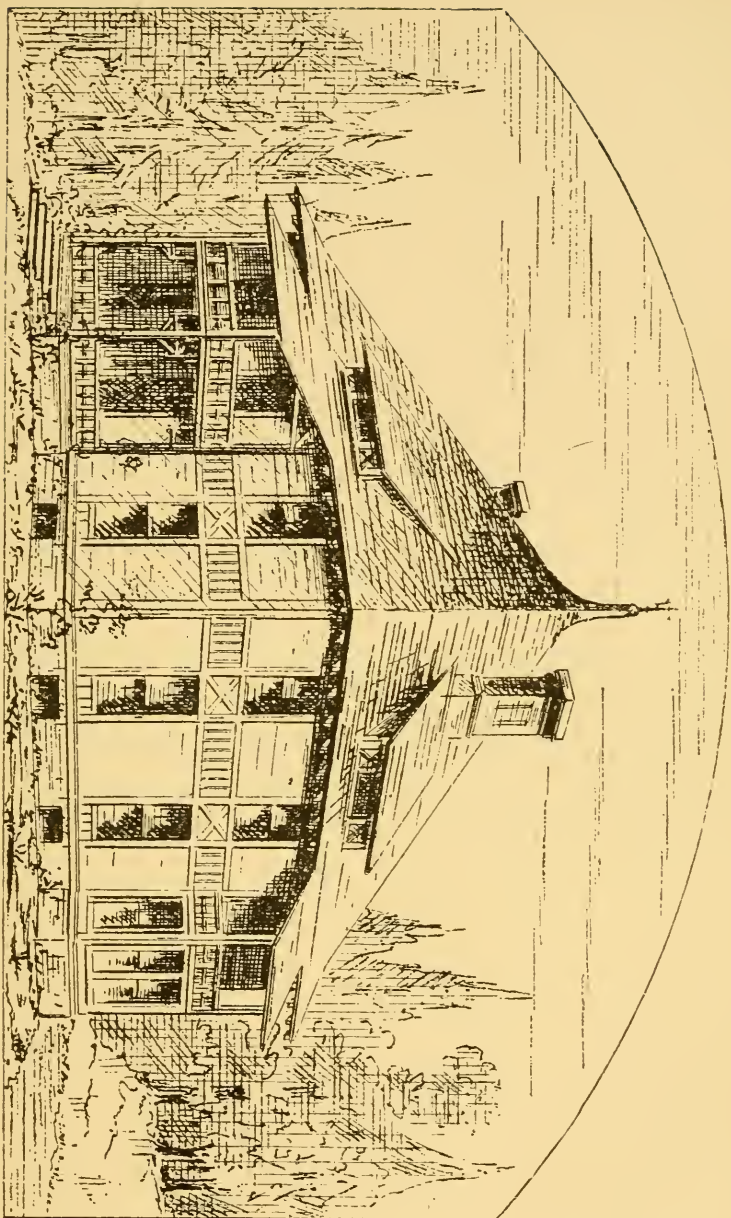
When it finally became evident that the poet was a philanthropist and a philosopher, as well as a gentleman, a scholar, and a man of sense, I laid aside my own fancies and helped him to mount his hobby at once.

In preserving the square form, the entrance hall at the south made the library at the east necessary ; the library at the east demanded the stairway at the north, and the stairway at the north required the pantry at the west. The bay-window from the sitting-room was a

temptation not to be resisted, and the two-story porch was allowed as not being really a part of the house. It is painful to imagine what the house would have been without it.

So the building was nominally square, thirty-six feet each way, and as nearly cubical as possible, considering the roof, which was made without gables, culminating in a point — a silver-plated mathematical point — thirty-six feet from the ground.

Subsequently, an unfinished room leaned lovingly against the back side of the establishment. It contains fuel, empty barrels, tools, and all the sundry and various rubbish that will accumulate even in families who find their chief delight in “slicking up.” I shall not be surprised to see an extemporized chimney poking through the side of it in hot weather, and the steam of boiling clothes and other signs of laundry-work issuing from the open door.



THE POET'S ABIDING PLACE.

Mathematical houses may be millennial, but, as I have shown, the projecting bay, the two-story porch, the rear extension, and the oblong library have already thrown the rider of the square-house hobby. Yet the theory is fairly vindicated. The internal arrangement facilitates the household work; and by opening the wide doors between the rooms, the whole of the first floor, except the kitchen and pantry, becomes an open suite, which only needs skilful furnishing to be bewilderingly charming. The uniformity of details permits a better style of finish than could otherwise be obtained. Hard-wood floors for the uncarpeted rooms, walnut and ash for the stairs and other portions of the interior, — materials and workmanship better than is generally found in cheap houses. Partitions in second story, almost without exception, directly over those below, which is very desirable. The cellar is seven feet in the clear; first story,

nine feet six inches ; second, eight feet six inches ; and four dormers light the pyramidal attic, which will contain the heirlooms of a dozen generations, if it escapes the indignity of being cut up into dormitories.

The house might be built, without the plumbing, for about \$3,500.





CHAPTER XIII.

THE DOCTOR'S HOME.

HAVE you ever seen our Doctor? —
You don't know?

Then of course you have n't. A representative New-Englander. A man not to be overlooked in any crowd. I am careful not to indulge in a fit of overwork, without knowing that he is within reach. —

— Never ought to overwork? —

That 's a mistake. There would n't be much done in the world if we always kept on the safe side. What if we don't live quite so long, and find it necessary to call in the doctor, now and then, to wind us up?

— Nature better than medicine? —

That depends. Not if you limit her resources to the cruder elements. When I 'm run down and knocked up, in distress and out of sorts, our Doctor comes in and tells me, quicker than a flash, what I 've done that I ought not to have done, what I 've left undone, and just what I must do to be saved. He hurls at me in good terms, in good set terms, the condensed result of years, — yes, generations of study, — wraps me in his garnered wisdom, and tosses me as in a blanket out of the dark regions of grim despair up into the light of a restoring hope ; he shares with me, as far as it is possible for a strong man to share with a weak one, his own faith and will and courage. That I call one of Nature's grandest remedies, and I open my mouth like a young robin for the accompanying dose, whether it 's belladonna or bread pills, quinine or cold water.

What 's more, I 'm cured, and 't is n't of the least consequence whether by faith or by physic. Nature is at the bottom of it in either case.

—Prevention better than cure?—

I don't know about that either. Why did n't the Almighty prevent sin instead of curing it? O, I know what you mean, and our Doctor works in this direction quite as effectively as in the secondary department of his art, both by precept and by example! Why, he would lose half his patients if they were to imitate him, even in the planning of his new house, it is so completely equipped for comfortable, healthful living. He proposes some knotty conundrums for the architect. Some of his requirements seem at first sight little less than flat contradictions, and the unusual, unheard-of arrangements for convenience and safety make the builders gape in amazement ; but there 's no going back on his decisions.

In the first place he insists upon a side-hill. He says he won't live in a cellar, he won't be crowded into the worst room in the house, and he will have waiting-rooms enough, to prevent feeling anxious and hurried while in the consulting-room. He likewise insists, positively, that he must honor his profession by making his consultation-room the best in the house; it would be the last impertinence to offer counsel to a broken-legged man, or to a victim of gout or paralysis, at the top of a long flight of stairs; so this must be on the first floor. Near by, a couple of waiting-rooms: one for ladies in gorgeous array, which will be wainscoted with mirrors, and supplied with the latest magazines; another for gentlemen, containing at least one indispensable article of furniture. Both these must be light, airy, and cheerful, and furnished with open grates.

"Then," says the Doctor, "somewhere in

the bowels of the building, in the hold, there must be a huge limbo, in the shape of a hall, where I can get up a small purgatory of my own. Hither the great 'unwashed,' male and female, will come, and if they don't suffer penance enough to get them into heaven, it sha' n't be my fault. I've got a pet bull-dog of the most ferocious breed, plenty of blisters and calomel, not to mention certain other instrumentalities, that will have a moving effect."

At that rate I suggested to the Doctor that his purgatory would soon be empty, and he would have room to let.

"Never, never! I make myself into a first-class bomb-shell, to scatter them. I frighten them half to death with accounts of the last small-pox case. But it's of no use, they will fill my house, as the frogs filled Egypt. They will follow me to my grave, and pound on my tombstone."

Certainly our Doctor does n't waste any tokens of affection and respect on this particular class of patients. For all that, I'm perfectly sure that the penances, whether in the shape of bull-dogs, blisters, or blue pills, will be wisely administered, and salutary in effect, and in spite of his somewhat aristocratic expressions of contempt, I shall not be surprised to learn that the aforesaid knocks are faithfully answered !

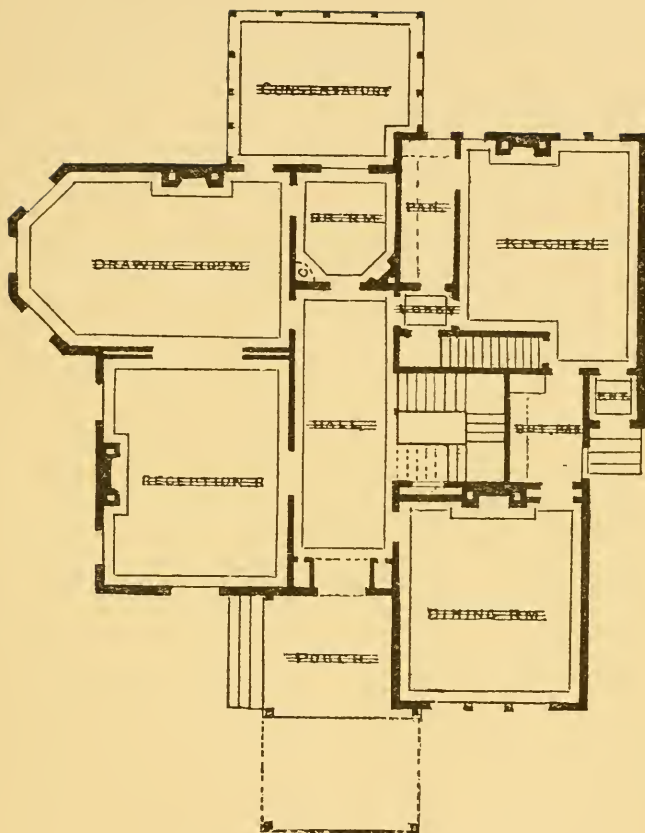
But see. No sooner has he declared that this professional suite of rooms shall be on the first floor, having a fine pleasant entrance protected by a *porche cochère*, the principal apartment being in the south corner, and "the pleasantest room in the house," than he also insists that the family rooms — reception-room, drawing-room, dining-room, kitchen, and all — must likewise be on the first floor, and the drawing-room must be in the south corner and the pleasant-

est room in the house. These, too, require an entrance porch as correct and dignified as any in the town, and neither entrance will be tolerated at the north side. Moreover, every room must have abundant sunlight, and the northern wall be as free from windows as possible, and from openings of any kind.

Yes, truly, a little perplexing; but if the Doctor should ask me to draw a plan of fourteen rooms all on one floor, and all in the south corner, I should make a mighty effort to accomplish it. One doesn't feel at liberty to tell him a thing can't be done. Whether the pill is assafoedita or abstruse architecture, there's no choice but to tackle it. Let me tell you what else he wants, and then show you how I'm trying to unravel his snarl.

All the rooms must be so completely ventilated, that the idea of carrying them more than ten feet high, for the sake of a reservoir of pure

air, would be absurd. To accomplish this, there must be in each a large independent ventilating-flue, opening at the ceiling, and in every room an open grate, each grate having a separate flue to the top of the house. To accommodate these grates there must be a lift for conveying wood and coal from the lower to the upper regions, and for any other transportation of freight up or down. The windows must run just as near to the ceilings as the use and construction of the walls will allow. The purifying influence of light is no poetic fiction, it's a philosophical certainty of the most matter-of-fact kind. The hot-air registers—for the house will be warmed by steam as well as by fireplaces—must be contrived so that ladies cannot enervate themselves by sweltering over them; and if carpets cannot be banished altogether, there must be a border, at least two feet wide, of handsome woods around each room. He declares the

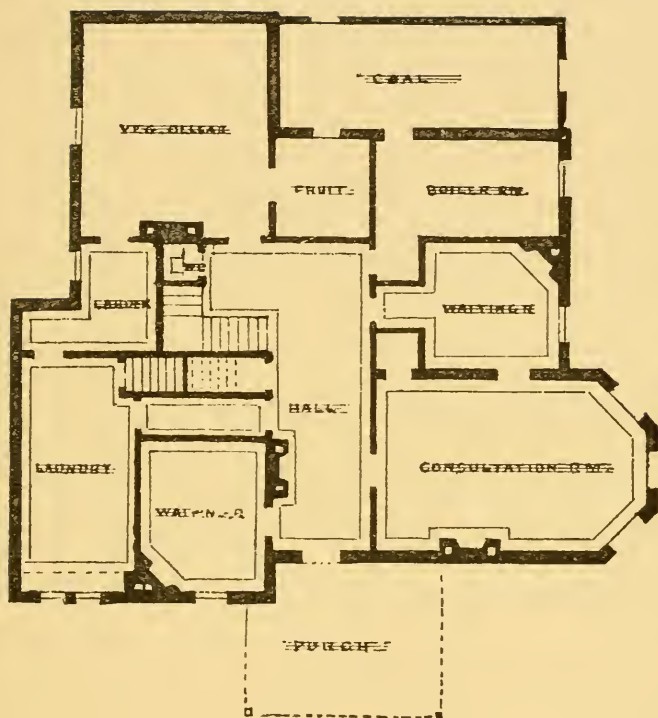


THE DOCTOR'S FIRST FLOOR.

carpets shall be torn up and shoved into the grates if, by any connivance, they are allowed to cover these borders. I have known an anxious mother to lose her small "peace" (spell it as you please) of mind for a month after hearing one of his tirades as to the contagion-carrying properties of carpets, curtains, and cats. His closing climax, when he inquires, "Would you rather lose your children or the colors out of your carpets?" never fails to bring down the house. The outer walls must be as non-conducting of heat and of moisture as it is possible to make them; all the essential partitions of brick; and the floors thoroughly deafened with mortar, not only to prevent noises, but to save heat in cold weather, and to check the combustion when the house gets on fire. The roof-boards must be similarly treated, for the last two reasons. Not a scrap of paper will be allowed on the walls, which must be

panelled in wood or treated with the hardest kind of hard finish. Then, if he chooses, the Doctor can employ some young Michael Angelo to decorate them with original views of the Holy Land and charts illustrating the progress of science. His directions concerning the water-works, the bells, the speaking-tubes, the gas-piping, the drains, and the infallible ventilation of the latter, that cannot by any possibility fail to operate, are minute and positive to the last degree, but not at all according to the favorite rules and customs of the contractors. To give you a sample of his instructions :—

“A place somewhere for a thundering big gong that would rouse the seven sleepers and serve for Gabriel if he should lose his horn, for the benefit of my ‘Moses,’ who ‘guards the restless hinges of the doors,’ and who sometimes indulges in a nap from which a whole salvo of artillery would fail to rouse him.”



THE DOCTOR'S BASEMENT.

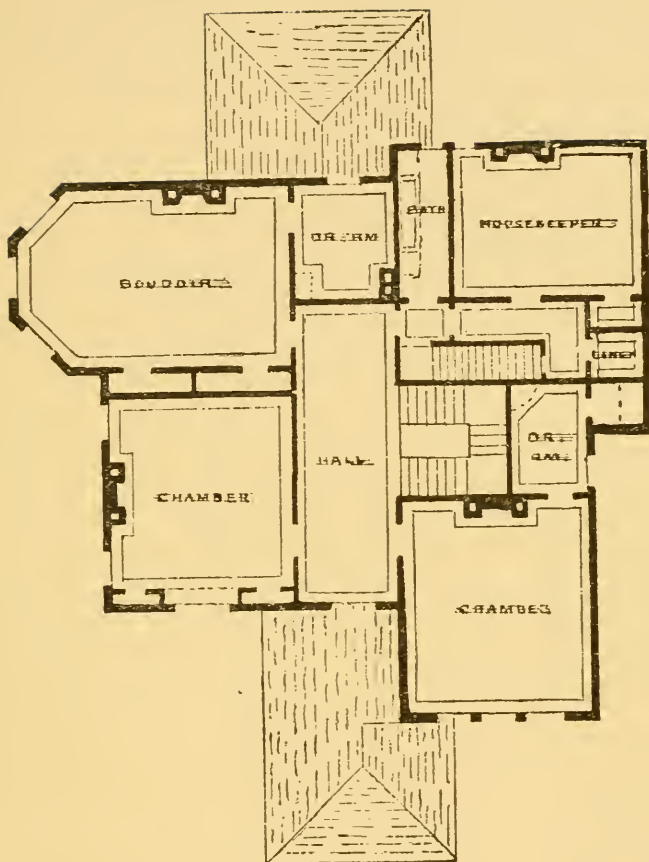
These plans show how far I have succeeded in harnessing the Doctor's thorough-bred ideal to the four-wheeled lumber-wagon of actual practice.

The side-hill lot, of course, furnished the key to the first part of the puzzle. But it must be a corner lot, and the corner must be toward the east. This gives the entrance to the family floor in the eastern angle, under the lee of the dining-room. The attractions of this apartment, by the way, are supposed to be within, and it's not desirable that the outward views should be too tempting. This faces a pleasant street, but it looks to the northeast. On this principal floor are also the drawing-room in the south corner, the reception-room, the kitchen flanked by pantries, store-rooms, and closets, with an independent front door for "Bridget," and a straight descent to the regions below,—the laundry, larder, and cellars,—these being quite separate from the remainder of

the lower story. From the kitchen also is an ascending stairway to the servants' dormitories. The principal staircase is open, standing at right angles to the hall, and receiving its light from a ground-glass window in the partition over the landing against the pantry. The kitchen is cut off from the main hall by a small lobby, and at the end of the hall is a little dressing-room and lavatory, that also communicates with the drawing-room and with the conservatory beyond.

All of this, take notice, is on the first floor, entered directly from the carriage-porch, which is on a level with the sidewalk; and the drawing-room is in the southeast corner, sunny windows, charming views, — the pleasantest room in the house.

Passing around out of doors to the other side of the building by a descent which is hardly noticed in the grade of the street, we find



THE DOCTOR'S SECOND FLOOR.

another front door and carriage-porch, a wide hall running into the centre of the house and terminating at the main staircase. This hall has a fireplace which will not only warm the Doctor's purgatory, — he can feed it with brimstone instead of anthracite, if he chooses, — but it has a capacious throat that will roar like a blast-furnace, with the combustion and convection of the odorous effluvia incident to such purgatorial realms.

At either side of the hall is a waiting-room, each with its fireplace, while the south corner is filled by the consultation-room, — an apartment so cheerful and cosey and altogether delightful, that the mere occupation of it for half an hour would cure any but the most desperate cases. Decidedly, the pleasantest room in the house.

In the second story, reckoning in the usual way, and starting from the other side of the house, is first and chiefly the boudoir, com-

manding delightful views over city, river, and mountains, high above the cankering cares of the streets,—a room for repose and lofty meditations. It has a dressing-room adjoining, two closets, and is by all odds the pleasantest—Well, I won't characterize. Comparisons are troublesome. In the corner looking to the southwest is the housekeeper's room, having direct communication with the working part of the house from the servants' dormitories above down through the kitchen and laundry to the cellar. Yet by locking a few doors all of this portion may be as completely detached from the remainder as though it were in a separate building. There is a bath-room well protected from cold, a linen-press, one of the other chambers has a large dressing-room, and all are well supplied with closets. It is not necessary to recount the minor conveniences of this second story,—though it's not fair to call them minor.

The great things of this world are oftenest made up of apparent trifles.

To go up still higher, the roof is just as simple as protecting shell can be, and there are no gutters. Concerning it, our Doctor discourses in this wise :—

“The roof is for the house, not the house for the roof. Its sole use is to keep the house dry. Anything about it for any other purpose is a senseless fraud. It is outrageous absurdity to string gutters around the bottom of it, pile valleys and hips and gables on the top of it, till the ice and snow dam it from head to foot, and the house and its whole contents are doomed to destruction. I can stand the house-cleaning deluge of soap-suds—once in six months. I can put up with a two-and-a-half-inch stream from the Ludlow reservoir in case of a false alarm of fire ; but I won’t be drenched on my own pillow by melted snow trickling through the plastering overhead.”

If, as Carlyle says, every squaw in her wigwam helps to civilize the world, or something to that effect, don't you see what a mighty power, physical and moral, lies in a house like this of the Doctor's?

—Everybody can't have such an establishment? —

Certainly not. Everybody does n't need it; but will you ever learn that the value of a house is not determined by its size or the money spent upon it, but by the thought and care and feeling it reveals?





CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOUSE THAT NEVER WAS BUILT.

ONE evening in midwinter, while at work alone in my office, I was startled by a knock at the door. It was nearly twelve o'clock, a wild snow-storm was raging, and the night was very cold. Feeling that neither men, women, nor ghosts ought to be kept waiting at such a time, I hastened to admit my visitor, an elderly seeming man, very much muffled about the head, and so completely sugared over with snow that cap and beard and garments had no color of their own. Tall, and grave of aspect, he shook the frozen flakes from cap and coat, — whether from beard and hair I could not tell,

for they were as white as the snow itself. I observed that his nose was aquiline and his eyes like the raven's wing. He had a low soft voice — that most excellent thing — in the house, and spoke English like a native. It was the Wandering Jew.



AN ANCIENT WANDERER.

“Being about to build myself a house, I have called to consult you in reference to the plans. I regret this unseasonable hour, but have only

this moment arrived, and have business that calls me away to-morrow — or to-day, rather," he added courteously, as the clock commenced striking midnight.

I assured him my best work was done while the sun shone in China, and begged him to state his wishes.

"I have done so already. I wish to build a comfortable dwelling-house of moderate cost, and desire you to furnish me plans and specifications for the same, to the end that it shall be judiciously arranged and economically constructed."

That sounded sensible, and I felt a degree of respect for the venerable traveller.

"As my time is limited, and I wish to have the matter in progress at once, please state your usual mode of procedure, that I may if possible forward the business."

"In cases like this it is usual for the party

about to build to express his own notion of what is requisite, either verbally or by drawings more or less imperfect. I then develop his idea, making such modifications as may be necessary for the sake of more completeness or better construction. If the instructions thus given are very crude, these preliminary studies are sometimes made more than once. When they are finally arranged in a satisfactory manner, designs of the exterior are prepared, and also submitted to the owner for approval; although, if he is wise, he will leave questions of outside effect mainly to his architect, always requiring him to observe such limitations as to cost as may be assigned."

"I am only an amateur, but have had considerable experience and abundant opportunity for observation. I think you will make few changes in my sketch. What is your next step?"

"The final preparation of plans, showing fully

and minutely the construction of the house, and conforming in all essential points to the studies as approved by the owner."

"A very proper course. I will leave this rough draught for you to elaborate, and call again soon." Whereupon he vanished through the keyhole.

I may be mistaken on this point. It is possible that I went to sleep in my chair and did n't hear him go out. At all events, he went, for he came back at the same hour and in a worse storm than before, to look at my studies. He entered with calm dignity, shook the snow from his garments, and stroked his beard while he examined them.

"Very good, very good," said he. "You have, I see, carried out my suggestions admirably. One or two slight alterations, but in the main quite correct."

(In fact, I had changed his plan from pole to

pole. There had been no form nor sense in it. Chimneys left out, stairs impossible, partitions cutting outrageous capers in the second story, and not a closet on the premises.)

“If you can make a design for the exterior that shall be equally satisfactory, I can promise you a job.”

Saving a slightly condescending air, as though he was really conferring a favor by allowing me to devote to his service the fruit of my most careful thought and study,—a manner by no means confined to wandering Jews,—this was not unreasonable, and I had barely time to acquiesce when he again — Well, I won't say where he went or how. I never like to state a surprising fact unless I can prove it on the spot. Some busybody is sure to take it up.

Promptly with the next driving storm my client, or patron,—whichever he considered himself,—appeared. His first remark may have

been original with him, still, I have heard it before.

“That looks well, very well — on paper.”

The ridiculous old tramp! Where else should he see it? Did he expect it cut in stone or cast in bronze? If anybody wants to pour a bottle of violet ink over a drawing of mine, or use it for lighting cigars, he will make himself far more agreeable by doing so, than by telling me in an uncertain, deprecating, non-committal tone that “it looks well — on paper.” However, this ancient party was too old to learn anything new, least of all things good manners, which can’t be learned by anybody after a certain age. His general information was so extensive, he was so assured of his own good judgment, that while listening to him I half felt that I was really blessed in the privilege of his patronage.

“Yes, this is very good; ah,—I think the

hall is six inches too wide. I suppose you can make it narrower."

"Certainly, but it will involve a change in the lines of the roof and throw the door out of place."

"Those are small matters, and, wherever it is possible, I wish to economize. Please make this slight change, and I will drop in again in a day or two."

I made the change, the storm continued, and he dropped in. Glancing at the hall, he saw that six inches had been cut off, and was apparently content.

"This will answer finely ; though I think the north chimney stands too much in the closet. Could n't you arrange the plan so as to dispense with it altogether ? Chimneys are expensive, you know, and dangerous on account of fire."

I thought there was more danger without

them, but agreed to tear down one of the chimneys.

“And while we are about it, I don’t quite like the dormer-window over the porch. Can’t you treat that differently?”

“Of course I can treat it in a million different ways, if time is of no account.”

“Everything else is quite perfect. Have you written the specifications?”

“I can’t write specifications until you decide what to build.”

“I would like to know how much it will cost to execute this plan. Can you give me an estimate?”

“I can give you a guess. I can’t estimate on an unknown quantity.”

“Very true, but if the specifications were written, I could get estimates. You see, I shall be obliged to reduce the size of the building if it cannot be completed for a given sum, nor

do I wish to pay for plans if unable to use them. So I think you had better write the specifications for the work as it ought to be done before going any further."

I wrote the specifications as well as I could, and four different estimates were based upon them, the highest being seventy-five per cent more than the lowest. The Jew decided to proceed — *But* — He wanted the doors to be made two inches wider. He wanted a different crook to the stair-rail. He preferred to have the doors open the other way. The pantry shelves were not quite wide enough, and there was one too many. He did n't like the roof, it had too steep a pitch, and its expression was not sufficiently cheerful. On the whole, he would have inside shutters with boxings, after the plans were made for outside blinds; and he must have a grate in the north chamber where the chimneys had been left out. The

cellar stairway was too wide by three inches, and the front steps by half an inch. Several of his friends advised him to make the rooms four inches higher, and his wife had seen a bay-window in Danbury that must be copied. He wished I would take a run down there and look at it. The porch, as drawn, was a trifle too open. He had noticed a porch on a cathedral in Quebec that was very chaste and elegant, and he wished I would try to imitate it in effect if not in size. He begged me not to forget the importance of the chimney-tops, and thought I could n't do better than carry out the design of those on the monastery of St. Bernard. He hoped I would provide abundant light for the central portion of the house, because that would be the warmest and most valuable. Without wishing to be unduly critical, he was free to maintain that the main cornice looked too heavy, and he must request me to

diminish its projection a foot or two ; and if I could make a different window-cap it would suit him far better. He had been much struck by an argument in favor of brick houses, and would like to know if these plans could n't be used for either brick or wood. I told him the plans could be used for anything under the heavens, from kindling fires to lying in a corner-stone along with the daily papers and counterfeit currency.

Of course his suggestions were not all made in a day, — that is to say, in a night, for he never came when the sun shone ; they ran over a long period of time, and I've scarcely begun to enumerate the points he raised. His advisers were legion, and no two agreed, yet he remembered each suggestion, and brought them all to me to be ground. As he modestly remarked, he had abundant opportunities for observation, and he certainly improved them.

There is not a building of notorious ugliness in the civilized world which I have not been importuned to examine, and to repeat its most obnoxious features in his proposed abode. The last thing found is what he covets. He is trying to get a house that shall cost less and be worth more than any other that ever was built. He is not satisfied with his money's worth; he is making himself disgusting, and everybody about him uncomfortable, by trying to get more than that. If an unthinking imbecile should deride his house after it is built, he would be miserable, and the approval of an artist and philosopher would be worth no more to him than the sanction of an ignoramus. He is horrified if I present a bill for my work, because he has n't used the plans,—as though the value of my time depended upon his worthless opinions. Indeed, he thinks the glory of working for a personage so famous is an abundant

reward for any trouble. He tires me, he frets me. I can do nothing well for him ; but I can't keep out of his way, for there's more than five hundred of him, and as soon as one goes another one comes.

He is not of those who patiently strive for excellence, who detect real faults but know a good thing when they find it, who have an intelligent faith in their own convictions, who are wiser this year than they were last, and learn humility by their own mistakes.

He is a selfish, ignorant egotist ; he is n't a Jew at all, and he is still at large ; for I saw him yesterday.





CHAPTER XV.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

IT was Sister Jane's suggestion. I was making my first visit to John's new house. Mrs. John had finished the evening work, the boy had scampered off to bed rosy with flannels and firelight, and a cheerful glow shone from the blazing hickory on the hearth. There is this good thing about an open fire. Only one selfish, shivering mortal can stand astride a hot-air register ; about four can embrace an air-tight stove ; but there's always room for another chair in the crescent group around a fireplace. John had been giving a serio-comic description of the house, and of his

experience, and concluded his story by declaring that he would like to sell the "old thing,"—meaning the new one,—and build another, just to plague the carpenters; he would know how to take them a second time.

"Then there's another thing I'd do,—keep a house-builder's journal, recording not only the cost of everything to a cent, and the number of hours I was on duty, but I'd make a memorandum of my emotions; when I felt blue and discouraged, I'd put it down; when I got mad I'd set that down, and tell the whole story of my mistakes and blunders: how many nights I lay awake thinking about it; how many times we moved the stakes on the lot; what alterations we made, what we talked of and didn't make, what we wanted and couldn't have; and so on to the end. Then I'd make a book and give a grateful world the benefit of my sufferings. If every man that builds a house

would go and do likewise, the thing would be reduced to a familiar science after a while, and a fellow who begins to build might have some idea whether or not he'd be able to finish."

"An account of your emotions would be profitable and pathetic," said Sister Jane, "but I think the world in general would feel more interest in a description by the architect of some of the houses which he has helped to build. I should be glad to contribute my mite of experience."

"That's so! If he will describe the people too, it will be a big thing. I'm willing to have him make a bright and shining example of me, for the good of the cause."

"You might take our plan and John's and Fred's," continued Jane, "with a dozen or two more, all under assumed names, and by giving the plans and a brief account of each one con-

vey a great deal of helpful information. These actual plans would be of more service, I think, than fancy sketches, even if they are not so complete in themselves."

"Yes, truth is stranger than fiction," put in John.

"More serviceable, certainly. When some one has built a house and lived in it, it has a sort of claim upon our human sympathy and respect. Even its faults are useful lessons. You must indeed carry out my suggestion. Take some of the most interesting of your clients, and give an actual history of the building of their different homes. It is only by this mutual comparing of notes that progress is made in anything; and if you can do nothing more than provoke criticism, set people to thinking, it will be a worthy service."

While I was casting about for an excuse for declining this obvious duty, and reflecting that

Providence turns our mistakes, accidents, and crimes even into blessings, by the increased efforts to counteract their effect and prevent their recurrence, Mr. and Mrs. Fred came in, the circle took a broader sweep, and the hickory sent up a brighter blaze. The schoolmaster tied the broken thread of conversation by explaining that all hands were urging the architect to write a book that should relate the varied experiences of divers and sundry people in the way of house-building.

“By all means,” said Mr. Fred, — “by all means, but don’t try to make a lot of model houses. I used to believe in ‘model’ houses, and thought I would build one some time, but I’ve found out that there is n’t any such thing. There may be model lodging-rooms and model tenements, model barns, perhaps, but every man must be a law unto his own house. The architect is n’t born yet who can make a plan that

will suit everybody : satisfying the owner is all that can be expected. Use actual plans, too. I should learn more from two real houses than from twenty air-castles."

"As to their interior," said the schoolmaster, "but no further than that. Use is doubtless a valuable test of merit in the plan, but we don't care to see any heliotype reproductions of the conventional outsides that are all around us, evidences of the perverted or uncultivated tastes of their owners. So I would say, take what liberties you please with exteriors, but be sure they are economically adapted to actual floor plans. You can produce a striking effect upon almost anything if you do not hesitate to modify internal arrangements for the sake of outward form and proportions ; but where use is the chief concern, this is not admissible. A fancy cottage, summer residence, porter's lodge, or any other semi-ornamental structure is a very different

affair from a house in which a mechanic or other laboring man may safely invest the savings of half a lifetime. Give us illustrations of this kind, cheap and simple, but thorough and easily kept in repair. The largest number of houses built in the world will always be of this class, and the artistic growth of the community depends upon their character rather than upon the style of the rarer and more costly buildings."

"Yes, sir!" said John. "Twenty perfect little beauties, that don't cost more than fifteen hundred dollars apiece on an average, will go further towards making men domestic, patriotic, artistic, and everything else that's virtuous and lovely, than a pair of hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar churches with steeples that run up out of sight. That's so."

Mrs. Fred couldn't see it exactly in that light. It seemed to her impossible to give a

really artistic character to the cheapest kind of work,—work which apparently knows no law but necessity,—barrels, for instance. We did n't argue the point, but those who are familiar with the subject know that there is room for considerable beauty even in the form of a barrel.

“I think the examples most needed,” said her husband, “are of the middle class of dwellings, those costing from four to eight thousand dollars. The fact is, a great many men who are tolerably rich, as things go, have built large establishments for themselves, and find they must either shut up the best part of them a large share of the time, or else bear a heavy burden of care and expense for the rest of their lives. They seem to have rushed into house-building in a spirit of rivalry, apparently forgetting that a forty-thousand-dollar house implies an annual outlay of half that sum to ‘run’

it in good style. Such houses can't be sold once in a dozen times for anything like their first cost ; and instead of adding to the enjoyments of life, they involve greater care and heavier burdens. If you can show plans that give room enough and none too much, plenty of comfort and the best style, a score or more of such would find a ready market."

At this point we were interrupted by a knock at the door. Not a ring : there are bells for use inside the house, but whoever would enter from without must ask admission by means of an old brass knocker that John had picked up in a junk-shop, — supposed to have come over in the Mayflower. Mrs. John answered the call, and returned bringing a curiously constructed pyramid of shawls, waterproofs, tippetts, furs, mittens, and rubber boots, which wrappings she proceeded to unwind and peel off from the invisible kernel, until at last little Miss Moffat

stood upon the hearth ready to drop into the easy-chair that gave a second expansion to our group. Miss Moffat is an invalid. Briefly stated, her sole object in living is to keep herself alive. She is not at all ignorant of the common duties and concerns of life, but they are interesting to her only as they affect the problem of living.

John at once informed her that the architect was being crammed for a new book, and if she wanted to immortalize herself and confer a lasting boon upon her fellow-sufferers, she would heave in a handful of advice before it was too late.

"I can think of but one use for houses," said the lady, "and that is to prolong life. We should die if we tried to live without them. Everybody knows there isn't a well person in America, and it's all because of our miserable houses. They are not half warmed or venti-

lated. They are damp and dark, very well contrived to kill people, but not at all adapted to keep us alive. I hope to build myself a house some time, and perhaps I can tell you some things about it that will be useful to others. My own room will be in the southeast corner. Both the outer sides will be wholly of glass, and one entire side will be movable; fixed so it may be raised up from the bottom and stand out like a piazza roof or an awning. Opening a window makes a draught,—I think I feel one now, perhaps it's the fireplace,—but this will turn the whole room out of doors without even moving the furniture. At the south side I shall have a glass bay-window with a violet glass roof. Somewhere in the top of the house I shall put a large refrigerator, like an inverted furnace, to burn ice instead of coal, with pipes like furnace-pipes running to each room to keep them cool in hot weather. I suffer

very great depression from the heat in summer. I shall not allow a wool carpet in the house; they choke my lungs terribly, and I fully expect to die of consumption just from the effects of dust. Of course the house will be warmed by steam as well as fireplaces. I can't endure any change of temperature; it gives me neuralgia in my feet, and toothache in my head. This is a fearful climate at the best, and has to be made all over again if one expects to survive a single season. I wish the Pilgrim fathers had been driven by a gale from the northeast a thousand miles from Plymouth Rock before they landed. I shall want bells and speaking-tubes to every room, for, if I happen to be left alone, it may be necessary to try them all before anybody will come. The doors must be trimmed with some soft elastic substance, — rubber won't answer on account of the odor, — not only to stop currents of air, but to prevent slamming, my

nerves are so sensitive to jars; and if there is any possible way of keeping the mice out, or preventing windows and blinds from slamming, I hope you will explain it. If I hear them in the night I'm sure to think it's burglars, and then I can't sleep. One thing you won't like, but no matter. I shall insist upon having the roof steep enough to carry off snow, and absolutely unbroken by dormers, with not a valley or a gutter near it. If damp snow lodges on the house it affects my rheumatism instantly, even if it doesn't melt and run down inside the house. The piazzas must not hold the snow either, or shade the windows in the least. Of course I cannot go up and down stairs. My house must be level, and all on one floor, and that at least six feet from the ground, in order to be above unhealthy mists and dampness.

“Health is everything. The most beautiful

abode in the world is a prison to an invalid ; and if I am really to give you a handful of advice, it will be that you show the construction of houses that shall minister to health. If it were not for the preservation of this unspeakable blessing, we should surely dispense with them altogether, and live out of doors."

"Now it's my turn," said Mrs. John. "You remember how I opposed the stone walls. Well, I'm so thoroughly converted, and so happy in my faith, that I would like to see everybody else of the same convictions. There are millions and millions of just such stones as are built into our house lying waste ; and it would be a very small thing, indeed, compared with the magnitude of the subject, to devote a whole book, as big as Webster's Unabridged, to showing up the merits of stone walls. It would lead to hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands —"

“Call it millions and tens of millions,” said John.

“— Of homes as charming as our own ; and that is saying a great deal.”

Here the old brass knocker gave two resounding peals, and the opening door admitted the schoolmaster’s father, a vigorous old gentleman, whose hair had grown white in a life of constant thought and activity.

“Father, what shall the architect put into his book ?”

“Homes for the poor.”

“The poor cannot build homes.”

“They must be built for them. I go down to the city and find in certain localities a bordering fringe of poverty, hunger, and dirt. I find rows of disgraceful shanties, in which I would not ask my cows to live, filled with human beings,—helpless children, and men whose heads are grayer than mine. Some of these

habitations are large, and some are small; some are of brick, and some of wood; some are old, and some, alas! are new; but all are terribly foul within and without, overcrowded, unsafe, and utterly unfit for homes. No ventilation, little or no sunlight, dampness and darkness in which the very weeds are choked to death; no drainage, no clean water, no spot of bare earth even to which healthy life can cling. An entire family, perhaps more, living, eating, cooking, sleeping in one room! From these homes, in which it is not possible for man to be anything but brutal, for women to be anything but coarse, for children to be anything but vicious, we expect useful members of society! But our selfishness recoils upon our own heads. Half the money spent upon jails and poor-houses, reform schools and hospitals, would make these institutions needless if it were wisely used in preparing homes for the poor,—something good

to crowd this enormous evil out of existence. It would not require benevolence and philanthropy, only common decency and prudence. The rent paid for these hovels, in which misery, vice, and crime are bred, would be a fair interest on the cost of comfortable homes. If no one man or private company of men can be found who have the means, the head, and the heart to provide these, it should be done as a means of public safety and economy. If there is not enough love for God and man in the nineteenth century to voluntarily remove this stain upon our civilization, then we shall be forced to do it by the inevitable judgment that falls upon those who forget their obligations to humanity.

“Put these homes for the poor into your book, and your work will live long after you are forgotten.”

“But this can hardly be called architecture.”

“No. It is not architecture, it’s Christianity.”

If the evening had been longer, I suppose the advice would have been stronger ; but, with the usual privilege of the Advised, I took what was agreeable, and put away the rest for future use. Mrs. Jane’s seemed most available, and I selected a dozen or more of actual plans, each one typical of a certain class or condition, and made it the text of such architectural discussion as seemed appropriate. Each one is faulty, and in each, I trust, some merit will appear. Fred is right as to the model house. The noblest use of a good thing is as a foundation on which something better may be builded ; the work that is worthy to be placed as a crown is still out of sight, above and beyond us. We may point towards it, suggest the steps that will lead to it, but the time has passed when

any man or company of men can speak with authority. The duty of each to work out his own salvation has changed all the old plans of progress. To provoke original thought and inquiry is better than to give dogmatic instruction.



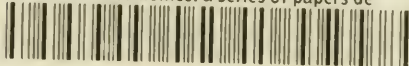
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